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THE

ENGLISH AT HOME.

THE

ENGLISH AT HOME.

ESSAYS FROM THE "*REVUE DES DEUX MONDES.*"

SECOND SERIES.

BY

ALPHONSE ESQUIROS.

AUTHOR OF THE "DUTCH AT HOME," ETC.

TRANSLATED BY

LASCELLES WRAXALL.

PUBLISHERS' FROM THE

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PREFACE.

WHILE introducing to English readers a new volume of French essays on British life and character, I venture to intrude a few remarks of a thoroughly personal nature. Some excellent friends, who were kind enough to criticise my previous efforts, while generally applauding my translation, regretted that I had not sufficiently adhered to the English idiom. Let me explain to them that this was done advisedly: it was my opinion that the great merit of these articles from the *Revue des Deux Mondes* lay in the circumstance that they were written by a Frenchman for his countrymen. I thought, too, that many an author might sit down to-morrow and write a far more correct work about England, but I considerably doubted whether he would find any readers. The field has been so trampled, that it is impossible to discover the smallest unknown plant in it.

Granted, then, that I had offered myself in my

author's place, and produced a symmetrically correct work, in which every fact had been carefully weighed and tested, and every heterodox opinion had been discarded,—what would have been the result? My volume would have become as flat as a yesterday-opened bottle of champagne. It is true that I have here and there added foot-notes, for the purpose of correcting detail errors; but, as a rule, I have allowed M. Esquiros to speak for himself, and have translated his language with the most scrupulous accuracy. I do not think that, on comparison with the original, a single word will be found omitted, and I have studied to produce a Chinese imitation, simply from the fact that I wish M. Esquiros, and not myself, to appeal to an English audience. My desire is, and will be in future, to show what opinions a most intelligent foreigner entertains about English manners and customs, and wish to stand entirely aloof. My great anxiety has, therefore, been to reproduce, in decent and colloquial English, the very words my friend has employed, in articles of which the English leading journals have already spoken in the highest terms.

LASCELLES WRAXALL.

DRAYTON TERRACE, West Brompton.

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THE

ENGLISH AT HOME.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN OF CLUBS—THE MERMAID—THE DEVIL TAVERN—WILLS' COFFEE HOUSE — DRYDEN — BUTTON'S AND ADDISON — DR. JOHNSON—THE TURK'S HEAD—THE LITERARY CLUB—THE BLUE STOCKINGS—THE KING OF CLUBS—LORD WARD — THE KITCAT CLUB — THE BEEFSTEAK CLUBS — PEG WOFFINGTON — CAPTAIN MORRIS — THE SPECTATOR ON CLUBS—THE MOHOCKS.

As inhabitants of a country where Clubs played a part, more or less important, in two Revolutions, where a Jockey Club and a Railway Club still exist, as well as a considerable number of Circles, the French will perhaps feel surprised at being told that they have never possessed "Clubs" in the English sense of the word. We assumed the name, but we did not appropriate the thing: it is easier to borrow the language of a foreign nation, than to lay hold of its institutions. Any person who has lived in England very speedily perceives, that nothing resembling the English Clubs exists or can exist on the Continent, for these assemblies

presuppose rights, guarantees, and before all a lengthened training in liberty, which are not found in other countries.

The English refer the origin of Clubs to one of the ruling instincts of our nature. "Man," they say, "is a sociable animal, and as such joined his fellow-men in order to augment his own comfort and pleasures." This feeling, it is true, exists everywhere; but circumstances have been more or less favourable, according to the country, to the development of the associations. In England men have for a very lengthened period found the elements of security in the laws and the national character. The principal motive that seems to have guided the first founders of Clubs was the attraction of frequent intercourse with chosen persons who shared their tastes and opinions. The hand of authority, however powerful it might be, could never have established these harmonious groups, which formed themselves spontaneously round a common centre and thought. The Clubs have been constituted in the same way as English Society, by virtue of the law of affinities; and in this free medium individuals combine, just as particles are aggregated. There are certain persons we feel more thoroughly at home with than with others, and I heard an English lady say the other day, "I am only at all pretty in company where I feel pleased and where pretty women are present. I was frightful last evening, for we spent it at Lady W——'s." It is

the same with wit, conversation, and all the gifts of human nature, as with beauty. The English consider that the pleasures of social life are best cultivated among honourable persons who suit each other. There would be a deficiency, therefore, in these essays, if I were to pass by those Institutions which have so long exerted an influence on the literature, politics, manners, and domestic genius of Great Britain.

What the Clubs have been, and what they are, could not be strange to English life. In the history of the old Clubs, we follow the history of the national character, and of the manner in which it was formed: in the management of the modern Clubhouses we find the image of modern society, with its luxury, its spirit of order, and, we are compelled to add, its material appetites. The new forms of association have become in London a want, the necessity of the age. The life of an Englishman (I mean especially an Englishman belonging to the more or less aristocratic classes) is comprised for him in the three circles which, according to his idea, embrace everything—family, club, and country.

Clubs commenced in England with liberty, and nothing like them was in existence prior to the brilliant reign of Elizabeth. Up to that period the authorities had been too suspicious to tolerate permanent associations; while, on the other hand, the times were too gloomy, the social conditions too badly established, and individual action and

confidence too circumscribed, for the idea of meeting to occur to the citizens. The first Clubs formed in London, in a century which has been called the golden age of English poesy, were literary clubs. The oldest one known was held at an old tavern with the sign of the "Mermaid," in Friday Street.*

Sir Walter Raleigh was the founder of this society. No man ever more greatly surprized his contemporaries through his wit, eloquence, voyages, chivalrous adventures, sumptuous elegance, and his tragical fate. Tradition has it that at this same Mermaid the first potatoes were eaten which Walter Raleigh had brought from America together with tobacco. The other principal members of the Club were Shakspere, Ben Jonson, Francis Beaumont, and John Fletcher. The English regret, and justly so, that such conversations among such men have been lost for ever; but though walls may have ears, they have no memory; and moreover, the walls of the old tavern fell long ago. Two memorials alone can give us an idea of what was said at the Mermaid, of the flashes of wit that were emitted beneath those gloomy ceilings, and

* I am bound to remark here that the word "club" is not found in the works of Shakspere or his contemporaries; but the thing existed before the name. This name is first met with in the essayists of the reign of Queen Anne, and appears to be derived from the Saxon word "cleafan," to divide, because the expenses were equally divided among the members.

which have not been transmitted to us: one of them is a letter of Beaumont, in which he speaks enthusiastically of this Club, which had already ceased to exist; and the other is a narrative, alas! too short, by Thomas Fuller, who had been a witness of the combats of wit between Shakspere and Ben Jonson. He compares Master Jonson to a large Spanish galley, powerfully built in learning, and solid but slow in its movements; Shakspere, on the other hand, was an English man-of-war, inferior in height to his rival, but a better sailor, who knew how to take advantage of every wind, so quick and inventive was his wit. This is all that remains to us of this ancient Club, whose shadow sleeps with those who sleep.

Ben Jonson, who was born ten years after Shakspere, founded at a later date another Club, which met at the celebrated Devil Tavern, between the Temple Gates and the Bar. Shakspere, at that period, had doubtless retired to the country. The new Club was installed in a ball-room, which had been honoured by the name of the Hall of Apollo: a bust of the man whom the English now call "rare Ben" surmounted the door, and beneath this bust was an inscription in letters of gold. In addition to this welcome, Ben Jonson himself wrote for the Club a species of code in Latin verse, under the title of *Leges conviviales*. According to the statutes, ladies were admitted, and with them educated, gay, polished,

and honest men: torpidity, coarseness, and intemperance, were excluded. In a dark corner, visitors might indulge in soft quarrels and amorous sighs, but they must not engage in discussions on sacred things, read insipid poetry, or improvise bad verses. If we may believe tradition, these rules, and, more still, the moral authority of Ben Jonson, checked excesses, and disconcerted libertinism and frivolity. His literary reputation, his love of the table, and his great talent for speaking, attracted round him a band of wits and good livers, among whom the most noteworthy were Carew, Martin, Selden, Cotton, and Donne. In spite of Jonson's enthusiastic verses about the excellences of the divine liquor, the conversation of the Club members, it is said, was worth more than their wine. Moreover, friends could only invite each other to moderate libations, and each paid his share of the reckoning. It is not known how long this Club lasted, or how it ended. The objects of such meetings, and the motives that guided the first founders of Clubs, are at any rate clearly indicated by Beaumont, who expresses an opinion that it is the same with wit as other things—people have more when in the company of those who possess it, in the same way as they play better at cards and chess with a good player.

The literary and other Clubs seem to have disappeared when the stern times of Cromwell

arrived. A gloomy Puritanism at that day opposed all profane amusements and recreations. The reign of Charles II., on the contrary, was an epoch of regeneration for Clubs as for Theatres. A few years after the Restoration, the great house of call for authors, artists, clever speakers, and loungers, was Wills' Coffee House, standing at the corner of Bow Street. There Dryden reigned in his easy chair; in winter the chair was placed at its appointed spot near the fire, in summer it was transported to the balcony. The company assembled on the first floor, which was then called the dining-room floor (now the drawing-room), where there were separate tables. They generally remained till midnight. Social ranks and conditions were confounded, and stars of every magnitude, and ribbons of all colours, were seen there. It is even said that young men of fashion and of letters deemed it an honour to take from time to time a pinch from Dryden's snuff-box. Monarch elect by universal assent, he himself fixed the subject for literary discussion, and the room was generally crowded with persons anxious to hear it. One day a lad of twelve years of age stepped into the assembly: it was Pope, who was attracted by a wish to see the aged Dryden. Wills' Coffee House was the meeting-place for eminent men, loungers, clergy, and novelists, up till 1710, and jokes and news not to be found in the writings of the day passed from mouth to

mouth. The chiefs spoke, the regular visitors formed a circle round them, and came to listen and be astounded. After the year 1710 the house was occupied by a perfumer.

Some time after, Button's Coffee House was opened opposite to Wills'. It was here that Addison, when beginning to reign, installed his seat of empire. Instead of accepting his court as Dryden had done, he selected it; for, possessing a weak temperament, and a timid though ambitious character, he sought success by secret and covert ways. His adepts were Steele, Budgell, Tickell, Philips, and Carey, with whom he instituted a species of literary confraternity, such as the French called in 1820 *un cenacle.* The keeper of the coffee-house had been a servant of Lady Warwick, whom Addison was courting at the time. The regular visitors spent long hours, according to the fashion of literary men of the day, in drinking and smoking; Addison himself setting the example. It has been said that this great essayist sought in vain means to free himself of his natural timidity, and Mr. Thackeray reproaches him with never having understood women. And how could he have studied them in coffee-houses and taverns? There, in a circle of fervent admirers and disciples, he displayed that elegance and grace of diction which was celebrated by Pope. Button's Coffee House was the editorial office of the *Guardian.* There was

at the doorway a lion's head, with gaping jaws, which acted as a letter box, and the correspondence of the journal was slipped into it.* The Editors, that is to say, the Club, met in a little room at the back of the house.

Addison, quarrelling at a later date with the Countess of Warwick, withdrew his patronage from Button, and transferred the Club to a tavern, where, if we may believe Dr. Johnson, he sat late, and continued to indulge in too copious libations.

Like Dryden, and like Addison, whom he succeeded, Samuel Johnson frequented London taverns. He was pleased to see the smiling face of the landlord, the eagerness of the waiter, and the liberty that prevailed among the guests; a chair in a tavern was, in his opinion, the seat of human felicity. The Doctor had just made arrangements with his publisher for the famous English Dictionary, and boasted that he would alone complete what had occupied forty French Academicians, when he founded in 1749 his first Club in Ivy Lane. The members, ten in number, assembled every Tuesday evening, at the King's Head Beef Steak House.

* This emblem was borrowed from the Venetian Republic, where near the Palace of the Doges, were lions' heads in marble, into which pieces of paper were thrown, denouncing all that took place in the city. The lion's head of the *Guardian*, which had been surnamed "the strongest head in the kingdom," was kept for a long time as a literary relic at the Shakspere Tavern, in Covent Garden; it is now in the possession of the Bedford family.

Johnson at that time lived in a poor lodging near Temple Bar, the part of London most haunted by what have lately been called literary ghosts. The English have for these great men a species of superstition which honours them: they love to follow the shade of the Doctor through the narrow and obscure streets he walked along at night, touching the posts which he passed, and picking up orange-peel. His walk, we are told, was that of a whale; he rolled onward by virtue of a mechanism independent of his feet. The visitor is still shown some of the houses he lived in, and in Inner Temple Lane the staircase and chambers where the giant had his den. Fleet Street is full of recollections of his life. It was here that one night he offered his arm to a lady of quality, to help her in crossing the street, and the lady gave him a shilling, taking him for a waterman. It was in this part of town too that, when old and broken down with disease, he found, on a cold damp night, a poor barefooted girl lying on the ground more than half dead; he raised her in his arms, laid her on his back, carried her to his house, put her in his own bed without fear of scandal, and restored her health. His strength was athletic. One day while walking along the street, in a momentary absence of mind he took a heavy load from a porter's back and carried it some distance. The porter was at first quarrelsome, but at the sight of ›on's imposing stature he stopped short, and

thought that the best thing he could do was to take up his bundle without a word. With an excellent heart and a robust mind, though candid, rough, and vehement, the Doctor personified the defects and qualities of his race; hence I am not surprised at the tenderness of the English for the memory of the great critic, nor at the influence he exercised over the age. The members of his club were merchants, booksellers, physicians, and dissenting ministers. Here while the steak bubbled on the fire, Johnson indulged with valiant ardour in discussion and controversy. He spoke on all subjects with the authority given him by unbounded knowledge, an abundance of words which could only be compared to a river, and a bitterness of retort that disconcerted his adversaries. Determined never to be beaten, he disputed rather for victory than for truth; thoroughly versed in controversy, he would affirm one day with an air of solemnity that good predominated in the world, and to-morrow defend the contrary thesis with equal animation. Standing in a circle of hearers, he would rush furiously at his antagonist, and crush him by any means; but when the fight was over he would repent his victory, and say aloud before his adversary, "He was right, and I was wrong." A year before his death the Doctor had the idea of reorganising this Club which he founded in his youth; when, to his great regret, he learned that the landlord was no longer in this world, and the house shut up.

The assembly at Ivy Lane was eclipsed by the famous Club which Johnson founded in 1764. It was held at the Turk's Head, in Gerrard Street, Soho, the street in which Dryden had lived. The idea of the new Club was ventilated by Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great artist whom Johnson loved, and who painted the portrait of Goldsmith. The members met once a week at nine in the evening, and the conversation was kept up till far into the night. The Club gradually grew till it counted five-and-thirty members, and admission to it was an honour obtained by ballot. At first this assembly had no name, but after the death of Garrick it was christened the Literary Club. Garrick was the friend and quondam pupil of Johnson : they both came to London together, one to try his fortune on the stage, the other in letters. A short time after the opening of the Club, Sir Joshua mentioned it to the celebrated actor, who answered, "It is a good idea, and I think I will be one of you." This answer greatly displeased the impetuous Johnson. "He be one of us!" he exclaimed, "and how does he know that we shall let him ? The first Duke in England has no right to use such language." Garrick, however, was admitted some time after, and Johnson himself supported the election of the English Roscius. He was, according to Boswell, one of the most agreeable members of the Club ; and when Garrick died, all the members resolved to be present at his funeral.

It is interesting to introduce oneself in thought to this memorable Club, of which, thanks to tradition, written memorials, and portraits, the English are enabled to reproduce the most eminent members. Here are assembled the illustrious heads which will live for ever under Reynolds' pencil. Here is Burke the orator with his spectacles; here the table on which were served the omelette for Nugent and the lemon for Johnson; here is Gibbon the historian, who sits down tapping with his fingers the lid of his snuff-box; here is Sir Joshua holding his ear-trumpet to listen. At length there rises in the midst of the group the gigantic form, and strange and massive face, of the Doctor, with his brown coat, his worn black stockings, his grey wig, his large hands, his bitten nails, his rolling eyes, and twitching nose, his mighty voice, and his repartees which fall like a sledge-hammer on the heads of his adversaries. We fancy we are present at one of the meetings where Johnson proposed Sheridan as a candidate, because he was the man who had written the two best comedies of the day; when he attacked Swift with the violence of an English bull; and, before all, the one when he deplored the death of Goldsmith. The Doctor was fond of the author of the "Vicar of Wakefield," but he did not spare from his stings even those whose talent he admired. The charming poet and delicious humorist was not above the weaknesses of self-esteem: he was anxious to shine

in a circle of wits among whom his reputation, his Irish accent, and his simple vanity, gave him a place of his own. He complained about the inexhaustible eloquence of his friend Johnson, and the supremacy the other members of the Club granted him. "Sir," he said to Boswell, "you make a monarchy of what ought to be a republic."

In 1783 Dr. Johnson founded another Club in Essex Street at the Essex Head, where the members met thrice a week. This house was kept by an old servant of Mr. Thrale, a friend of the Doctor. The terms were low, and the expenses slight. Any one who missed a meeting paid a forfeit of twopence, each of the members was president in turn, and the waiter's fee was a penny. This great ardour of Johnson for founding Clubs is explained by his character and mode of life. He had been married, but lost his wife at an early age, and these night meetings became from that time the only amusement he could find after a day of labour and solitude. When old and pursued by the terrors of death, he did not give up his visit to Clubs, for, as he said, "it was the last link that bound him to life." In these meetings he was excessively sensitive as to anything that might be said to him about the state of his health. The evening when he went to the Tamelian Club, founded by a learned physician; Dr. Ashe, one of the members said to him, that he saw life coming back to the cheeks of the author of "Rasselas."

Johnson took his hand and exclaimed, "You are one of the best friends I ever had in the world!"

About the same period, that is to say, from 1746 to 1768, certain London coffee-houses continued to be fashionable, and attract wits. Jones's in Great Russell Street had nearly seven hundred subscribers at a guinea a-head, and the society was nearly the same as that of the Literary Club. There could be met Johnson, Garrick, Murphy, Goldsmith, Reynolds, Foote, and other men of talent, mingled with men of the world. The club-tables and books were preserved by Mr. Webster, a medallist, who occupied some years ago the first floor of the house. There was also, about the year 1781, a literary Club that met at Mrs. Montague's, and was called the "Blue-Stocking Club." It was at that day the fashion for women of wit to have parties, in which they took part in the conversation of clever men, who were animated by the desire of pleasing. Miss Hannah More, who lived in the time of Johnson, wrote a poem in which she described a Blue-Stocking Club, with the characters of the most prominent persons.

In 1801 a Club was founded under the title of the "King of Clubs," which met one Saturday a month at the Crown and Anchor in the Strand, and the literary element prevailed in it. The founder was Robert Smith, also known by the name of Bobus, who had been Attorney-General at Calcutta. The other principal members were

Lord Holland, Lord Henry Petty (afterwards Marquis of Lansdowne), Sir James Scarlett, who became Lord Abinger, Sir James Mackintosh, Lord Erskine, Samuel Rogers, the banker-poet, author of the "Pleasures of Memory," and Sharpe, whom the English called Conversation Sharpe. This Club had a great reputation for wit, and the questions of discussion were books, authors, and the topics of the day. Strangers were allowed admission as honorary members, and among those thus introduced was Curran, the celebrated Irish orator. He did not come up to general expectation at first, for he maintained for a long time an obstinate silence; but towards the close of the evening he proposed a toast—"To all absent friends." This toast was specially addressed to his neighbour at table, Lord Avonmore, an Irish Judge, who was subject to absence of mind. He then told his lordship quietly that his health had just been drunk. But the Judge had his revenge. One day, while sitting in Court, a donkey began braying in the middle of one of Curran's most splendid bursts of oratory. "Stop, Mr. Curran," he exclaimed, "one at a time, if you please." The barrister took the hint, but when the Judge began summing up, the same noise was heard, and Lord Avonmore looked anxiously at the bar. Curran replied, "It's the echo of the Court, my Lord."

Another visitor to the Club was the celebrated Lord Ward, who was introduced by Mr. Rogers.

The latter, at the time, displayed all the signs of bad health, and as the banker had behaved very shabbily to his noble friend in money matters, his lordship avenged himself by merciless jokes. When Mr. Rogers returned from Spa, he remarked that the place was filled with visitors, and that he had been unable to procure a bed. "What's that you say?" Lord Ward asked. "Was there no room in the churchyard?" Another time, Murray, the publisher, on seeing a likeness of Rogers in the Club-room, burst into raptures at the resemblance. "It is like life," he said. "You mean like death," his lordship retorted. And as the poet-banker happened to enter the room at the moment, he added, "Sam, I heard the sound of your hearse stopping at the door; after all though, you are rich enough to keep one." Such jests on such a subject will appear, I fear, rather in bad taste, but they are part of the English temper and character. The intrepid Saxon race likes to mock at everything which inspires man with a feeling of fear. Illness, death, the hangman, the gibbet, the terrors of the natural and supernatural world, become to him a subject for buffoonery in conversation and on the stage. "The English laugh, as if in defiance, and ridicule everything," one of them said to me, "excepting money losses." These sharp laconic sallies at the sight or thought of gloomy things and inevitable evils, emanate from a certain pride which opposes derision to the blows of Fate.

I must, moreover, add, that Rogers, though so often killed in the jokes of Lord Ward, attained a venerable old age for all that. As for the King of Clubs, it had the fate of all royalties that dazzle, but do not last long; in spite of the repartees of Sharpe, the talent of Mackintosh, and the confessions of Lord Erskine, it did not survive 1830.

By the side of the Literary Clubs there were the Political Clubs. The latter date back to the reign of Charles II.; and one of the most celebrated was the Club, or, to speak more correctly, the Confederacy, of the Kings. This Holy Alliance was formed shortly after the Restoration; it admitted statesmen and citizens of all ranks of society, provided that each of them consented to bear the title of King. Such a sobriquet was regarded as a sufficient guarantee of good monarchical principles, and would exclude the republicans. Charles II. was himself an honorary member of this society, but it is believed that he never attended its meetings. Another political reunion of that day was the King's Head Club: it was composed of Whigs, and members wearing a green ribbon in their hats, to distinguish them from the Tories, who had hoisted a red ribbon. They met in the evening, near the Inner Temple Gate. The Institution proposed before all to make proselytes, and readily admitted young men fresh arrivals in London. The resolutions of the leaders

spread from mouth to mouth, and what had been said over night at the Club became on the morrow town-talk. This innocuous assembly was a species of executive power which kept up a correspondence with all England. In the Club the debates most frequently turned on the defence of liberty and property, and there was a fondness for evoking the red spectre of Papistry and inflaming Protestant zeal. Under the pretext that the Reformers were menaced with speedy massacre, the members were urged to wear silken cuirasses, which at that day were supposed to be bullet-proof. This was the death of the Club, for in England, as in France, ridicule kills. In the end, the stern clubbists thus accoutred received the nickname of "Hogs in armour," and this Society, which had done some good service, was soon dissolved.

The numerous Clubs formed at that period in Great Britain exercised a beneficial influence upon manners. They served to refasten those social bonds between citizens which had been broken by the civil wars; and in those troublesome times, taverns became the meeting-places for men who were brought together by a sympathy of opinion and feelings. Round the social board and with chosen companions, men uttered in a low voice their hopes and fears, and the cup that went the round was the symbol of reconciliation and fraternity. In this way the disunited elements of society had a tendency to be reunited, and the

harmony restored by the Clubs was destined to spread at a later date throughout the nation. These Institutions were the cradles of that liberty of speech which at the present day forms one of the traits and conquests of the British character. The epoch of the political and other Clubs was the beginning of the 18th century: at that time flourished the Scriblerus Club, to which Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot belonged; and also the October Club. The latter seems to have derived its name from a change of ministry. Harley having been appointed Premier in October, more than 200 Members of Parliament formed themselves into an association. More royalist than the Queen, they blamed the Tory Ministry for not sweeping away all the Whigs who still remained in office, and tried to hasten the progress of the new government, which they considered too slow. Although this Club had a political rather than a literary tinge, it was composed of men of talent and statesmen who were at that time considered the arbiters of taste. The new publications were read and discussed there, and one of the most influential members of the Club was Swift, whose authority caused several members to be accepted or rejected. This assembly of impatient Tories created a sensation, but it does not appear to have exercised any great pressure on the affairs of the time. Queen Anne was alarmed, Harley undecided, and the Brothers (for such the members

called one another) could only groan at the inaction of their party, who did not know how to profit by victory.

In opposition to this Society we have the Kit-Cat Club. This, the most famous Club that ever existed, owed its origin to the English liking for mutton pies. A few years before the Revolution of 1688, there lived in Shire Lane, near Temple Bar, a pastrycook, who had become celebrated in his art. Attracted by the reputation of the mutton pies, Lords Montague and Dorset, the poets Prior and Garth, Jacob Tonson, the bookseller, and some others, used to meet in the shop. As the sign was a cat and a fiddle, and the name of the master of the house was Christopher, the Club which was founded a little while after took the name of Kit-Cat. At the moment when this Society was instituted, the country was in very critical circumstances, seven Protestant bishops were confined in the Tower, and the Papists were agitating in the name of James II. The members of the Club proceeded to Shire Lane under the pretext of eating mutton pies: but in reality they arranged the measures for repressing the sanguinary insurrection that soon broke out. "The men of the Kit-Cat Club," said Horace Walpole, "though regarded as gourmands and frivolous people, are after all the true patriots who saved Great Britain." The Club long survived its original design, and Christopher, who had grown rich,

established himself at the Fountain Tavern in the Strand. During the reign of Queen Anne, the Club contained more than forty members of the highest rank and merit, among whom the most remarkable were the Dukes of Somerset, Marlborough and Richmond, Sir Richard Steele, Addison, Congreve, and Garth—who was an active and zealous Whig. Sir Godfrey Kneller painted their portraits at three-quarter length, and hence comes the name of Kitcats given by artists to portraits of those particular dimensions. The attention of the Club was not limited to political matters, but also extended to literary subjects. This Club even voted a sum of 400 guineas to encourage the drama.

At the period when civil dissensions were beginning to grow calmer, it was thought advisable to enlarge the basis of the Clubs, by founding these Institutions on the material wants of life. It was more easy to agree about a good dish, than on religious and philosophical questions. The learned and the unlettered man, the Whig and Tory, the orthodox protestant and the dissenter, were able, at any rate, to agree on matters of eating and drinking. This fraternity of the table engendered after a while toleration of opinion. There were in London the Calves' Head Club, which met at Charing, the Eel-pie and the Goose Clubs. The love of good cheer, however, did not exclude political sentiments, and some of these associations

occupied themselves at the same time with affairs of state. Of all the gastronomic Clubs, the most celebrated is the Beef-steak Club. There seem to have been two Societies of this name. The first, whose origin is unknown, but which may date back to the reign of Charles II., had for its President the famous actress Mrs. Peg Woffington, the only lady admitted to the Club,—but then she could box like a man.* The members wore round their necks a golden gridiron, suspended from a green ribbon. The second Beef-steak Club sprang into life in 1735. Rich, the celebrated harlequin and manager of Covent Garden Theatre, was preparing the scenery for a pantomime to be performed the same evening, when he received a visit from several gentlemen. One of them, the Earl of Peterborough, having remained till a late hour, the manager, unintimidated by the presence of his noble visitor, began broiling a beef-steak for his dinner, and then unceremoniously invited the Earl to share his modest meal. Peterborough was so pleased with the beef-steak and the actor's conversation, that next week he returned, accompanied by several friends, and asked for the banquet to be repeated. From these circumstances

* One evening, when she had played with great success the part of *Sir Harry Weldon*, she went into the green-room, where Quin happened to be. "Only think," she said to him, "half the audience take me for a man." "Luckily," Quin replied, "the other half know the contrary."

originated the Beef-steak Club, which was rendered illustrious by the names of Hogarth, Sir James Thornhill, Sheridan, Fox, and Brougham. From Covent Garden the Club was removed to the back of the Lyceum Theatre, and the members, twenty-four in number, dined at four o'clock every Saturday, from the end of November to the end of June. The dining-room was appropriate to the character of the Club: it was panelled with oak, with the arms of the Society—a gridiron—carved in relief. At the moment when the clock struck five, a curtain was raised, and discovered the kitchen, in which the cooks could be seen engaged with their various duties. Two lines from Macbeth served as motto to this culinary laboratory, and in the centre was suspended the original gridiron of the Club, a venerable relic, that had survived two fires. After dinner, when the cloth was removed, the President seated himself in an arm chair, raised on a dais above the floor, and decorated with the little three-cornered hat in which Garrick in his day played the part of Ranger.

The glorious days of the Beef-steak Club were at the beginning of the 19th century, when it counted among its members John Kemble, the Duke of Clarence, Ferguson, and the Duke of Norfolk.* We can suppose that at such a meeting

* Renowned for his adventures, witty sayings, and gluttony. One evening, after dining at the Beef-steak Club, he turned into one of the Covent Garden taverns, and asked for a dish of

good cheer and good wine were only the seasoning of wit. Among the last names connected with the Beef-steak Club figures that of Captain Morris. He was born in 1745, but survived most of the merry guests whom he had amused by his gaiety, his rich imagination, and his poetical sallies. He was the sun of the table, and composed some of the most popular English ballads. The Nestor of song, he himself compared his muse to the flying fish. At the present day his Bacchic strains require the clinking of glass and the joyous echoes of the Club of which Captain Morris was poet-laureate. Type of the true Londoner, he preferred town to country, and the shady side of Pall Mall to the most brilliant sunshine illumining nature. Toward the end of his life, however, he let himself be gained over by the charms of the rural life he had ridiculed, and retired to a villa at Brockham, given him by the Duke of Norfolk. Before starting he bade farewell to the Club in verse. He reappeared there as a visitor in 1835, and the members presented him with a large silver bowl bearing an appropriate inscription. Although at that time eighty-nine years of age, he had lost none of his gaiety of heart. He died a short time after, and

peas and an ortolan. The waiter, deceived by the rustic appearance of the Duke, told his master that a market-gardener had had the impudence to order an ortolan. "If he had ordered a dozen, let him have them at once," replied the landlord, who had recognised his Grace.

with him expired the glory of the Club of which he had been one of the last ornaments. Only the name has survived of this celebrated gathering where so much wit was expended, but it was of the sort which evaporates with the steam of dishes and bowls of punch.

It was the character of the old clubs to satisfy all the tastes of human nature. A countryman who came up to London looked for a Club appropriate to his nature and turn of mind, just as a coquette goes from shop to shop to choose the ribbons that best suit her complexion. If he were phlegmatic, he proceeded to the Humdrum Club in Ivy Lane; and on entering the room witnessed a solemn scene. The members all maintained a profound silence, each having a pipe in his mouth and a pot of beer in his hand: they looked like a congregation of sages, or deaf and dumb men. Whenever one of them laid his pipe on the table, they waited for what he was going to say, and for the oracles that were about to issue from so great a mouth—but "it was only to spit," says Goldsmith, who was present at one of their meetings. The turbulent people formed the Rattling Club, while strong-minded men went to the Philosophical Society, where any one who produced a fresh argument against religion was admitted for the sum of fourpence, which was expended in punch. However strange a man's character might be, he found in London companions with whom to cul-

tivate his prevailing mania. Those fond of birds met once a week at a little pot-house in Rosemary Lane, where the Bird-fancier's Club was held: those fond of tulips met at the Florists' Club: while the dandies of the day assembled at the Beaux' Club, where nothing was talked about but clothes, ribbons, and new fashions. Men of morose and cross temper formed the Surly Club, which met near Billingsgate Dock: there they abused everybody, and ill-treated each other with ferocious joy. The usurers sought the company of their fellows at the Split-farthing Club. Hopkins, immortalised by Pope, was a member of this Club, which met in a dark room to save oil and candles. Commercial men who had failed consoled each other at the Unfortunate Club, which met at the sign of the Tumble-down Dick in the Mint: a simple bankruptcy was a sufficient title for admission, but a fraudulent one was preferred. The mendicants dragged themselves to the Beggars' Club, where blind men regained their sight, and the dumb speech. Thieves went nightly to the Half Moon, a small tavern in the Old Bailey: it was the Thieves' Club. The market-women assembled at the Flat-cap Club, which was for a season the gathering place of gallants and coffee-room haunters: the young gentlemen paid their court to these ladies with burnt brandy and formidable mugs of porter. Each man was thus enabled to join a society harmonising with his tastes, habits, and disposition.

Englishmen of a more or less Gascon character desired entrance to the Lying Club, whose origin I must describe. Sir Harry Blunt, a man of wit, and remarkable for his skill in loading his stories with false colours, received one day some strangers who had come to study the customs and curiosities of London. He took them to the Bell tavern in Westminster, where they dined sumptuously. At table each person tried to amuse the company by narrating the most extraordinary and fabulous adventures, and the evening proved so agreeable to Sir Harry that he resolved to form a Club on the same model. The first rule was that whoever spoke a word of truth between six and ten p.m. would be condemned to pay for a gallon of wine, the sort to be chosen by the President. The candidates underwent an examination, and telling falsehoods was not sufficient, they must be told artistically; any improbable feature was regarded in the same light as truth, and incurred equal punishment. The President wore a blue cap and red feather; but if one of the members during the evening told a falsehood more daring and splendid than the President, the latter at once yielded to the victor his chair and the attributes of his dignity.

These associations having always been a mirror of the national character, we may expect to find in old England a great number of eccentric Clubs. One of the most celebrated was the Ugly Club. It was started at Cambridge during the reign of

Charles II., and began with a dinner to which the ugliest men in the town were invited. Some of them declined the honour, but after a certain amount of difficulty the society was founded. At the inaugural banquet a student of King's College, who had been surnamed Crab on account of his ill-looks, bravely accepted the office of chaplain. The members, however, were less fortunate in the election of a president, for no one was particularly anxious for this sort of superiority. The rules of the Club were engraved on a tablet. No one could be admitted unless adorned with some striking deformity, and when two candidates were equally ugly, the one who had the thickest skin was selected. The new member on his entrance treated the Club to a dish of codfish, and made a speech in praise of Æsop. The portrait of the celebrated Hunchback also hung on the walls of the club-room with those of Thersites, Duns Scotus, Scarron, and Hudibras. The Club became renowned, and the members, encouraged by their success, sent Charles II. an invitation to join them. The King laughed heartily, and said he could not come himself, but would send them a couple of bucks. The Club was at a later date founded in London under the same title by Hatchet, who had the honour of introducing a new word into the English language, and the inhabitants of Great Britain still give the name of hatchet-faced to a peculiar sort of ugliness. This gentleman was very celebrated for the

length and size of his nose, about which an infinitude of anecdotes is told. After him, Jack Wilkes was elected perpetual president of the Club in the early part of the reign of George III., and Gabriel Riquetti, Comte de Mirabeau, was unanimously elected an honorary member when he paid his visit to London.

The Ugly Club had a rival in the No-nose Club. A gentleman of strange humour, while walking about the streets of London, was struck one day by the great number of noseless men he met, and hit on the idea of inviting them to dine at a tavern. Here he organised them into a fraternal society. This Club assembled once a month, but, at the end of a year, the founder died. The members—who, in their own words, were not men "to let themselves be led by the nose"—would not submit to another chief, and separated. At the last meeting one of the poets of the Club read an elegy in honour of the friend they had lost, who had gone to see their patroness snub-nosed Death.

Still in virtue of the principle that like will join to like, a Club of Fat Men was formed in the last century. The latter gentlemen did not meet to indulge in wit or light conversation, but to behave nobly to one another. The room they met in, which was of dimensions appropriate to the objects of the Club, had two entrances, one through a door of moderate size, and the other through spacious folding doors. If the candidate could enter by

the first, he was considered unworthy; but if he was stopped on his passage by his venerable corpulence, the doors of honour were immediately opened to him, and he was hailed as a brother by the imposing assembly; so that the first condition for admission to this Club was inability to enter it. In opposition to the Club of Fat Men, a Thin Club was founded in the same town: a considerable market town Addison calls it, without mentioning its name. The latter, who were thin and envious, represented their rivals as men of bad principles, and managed so cleverly as to deprive them of the public favour. The two factions rent each other for several years, and the thin men threatened to shut the fat men out of the civic offices, when they at length consented to make a compact. It was agreed that, in future, the two chief officers should be selected, one from each Club. These two officials were consequently coupled annually according to the law of contrasts, one fat and the other lean.

Height, and other accidents of nature, also served as the basis for strange associations. There was, for instance, in London, a Tall Club. These gentlemen proposed, according to their statement, to save the human race from the decadence with which it was menaced by the invasion of little men, and the ravages these pigmies performed on the heart of woman. The little men, knowing that union makes strength, formed themselves, on their

side, into a coalition, called the Short Club. This Club was founded on December 10, the shortest day of the year: the meeting-place was in the little Piazza, and from the windows could be seen Powell's puppets, a species of theatre and actors, for whom the members of the Society had a thorough paternal sympathy. The first time they took possession of their Club-room, the table came up to their chins, and the President disappeared in his chair, so that, in spite of the presence of that dignitary, the chair was almost vacant. It was then decided that this inconvenient furniture, made for ordinary mortals, should be abolished, and chairs, tables, and other articles, better suited to the stature of the clubbists, should be substituted. The latter having recognised, with great good sense, that it was not so ridiculous to be little, as to try and appear tall, all swore, on forming the Club, that they would bravely beard those hyperbolical monsters, the members of the Tall Club. The statutes consequently declared severe penalties against any man who placed cork-soles on his shoes, who stood on tiptoe in the mob, who wore a tall wig or a high hat to add to his height, who mounted a lofty horse, or sat on a large book to exalt himself in his seat. As the Club was composed of men of letters, no opportunity was neglected of relating historical anecdotes that did honour to little men. They incessantly sang a pæan to little David—who conquered the giant Goliath; little Alexander the

Great; Pepin the Short; little Luxembourg, who made a great king of Louis XIV.; and above all, the poet Horace, whom Augustus called lepidissimum homunculum. Pope tells us that he belonged to this band of dwarfs: being so short of body, with long arms and long legs, he compared himself to a spider. If we may believe him, it was the unanimous opinion of his co-clubmen, that, as the size of the human race had constantly decreased since creation, it was the intention of nature that man should be little. They flattered themselves, therefore, that by the aid of progress their fellow-men would some day attain perfection,—that is to say, the type of shortness which the Little Club so well represented.

I should be astonished had not love been a factor among the eccentric Clubs. There was in fact at London the Fringe Glove Club, and at Oxford the Sighing Club. A mistress, and a poem in honour of that mistress, were the candidate's diploma of admission. The man who expressed the violence of his passion in the most pathetic terms was elected President for the night. As the bond of this association was some misfortune of the heart, the members shunned the society of other men, and united together in order not to incur ridicule. Nothing could be more incoherent than their speeches: the Sigher who entered the room did not address his fellow members, but threw himself into a chair, and cried, speaking to himself,

"I have seen her. She was never so lovely as this evening! She looked at me. Alas! it is all over with you, my heart!" The others, with a piece of lace or a broken fan in their hands, paid no attention to his elegies, as they were themselves absorbed in their love dreams and extravagant soliloquies. The rivals, instead of fighting a duel, drank together to the health of their lady love as many times as there were letters in her name, and the conqueror was the man who proposed the most killing toasts. There was also the Widows' Club, consisting of ladies who were seeking a consoler. These ladies had at first resolved to hang the Club-room with the portraits of the dear departed; but as these pictures would have covered all the walls (one of them had been married seven times), they recalled their first decision, and eventually set up their own likenesses. One of them, addressing her tearful neighbour, said to her, "You are crying, my dear, less for the husband you have lost, than for the one you would like to have."

These strange Clubs * were at any rate inoffensive, but by their side were others of a gloomy and dangerous nature. I will not dwell on the

* Ought I to count among the literary or the eccentric clubs a party of London men who met at the Boar's Head in Eastcheap, the same tavern which Falstaff frequented with his jolly companions? Each of the members of the club chose one of Shakespeare's characters: one was *Falstaff*, another *Prince Henry*, a third *Bardolph*, and so on.

Duellists' Club, whose President had killed twelve men in affairs of honour, nor on the Man-killers' Club, to gain admission to which a man must prove one homicide at the least, nor the Terrible Club, whose members were distinguished by the length of their swords. Thank Heaven! these Clubs did not live long. The Sheriff interfered; the hangman laid hands on the men of honour, the knights of blood, and had such a thorough settlement with them that the savage Clubs ended with most of their members on the gallows. A similar fraternity, held together by a desire for evil and hatred of other men, created more sensation than all the rest in the reign of Queen Anne; it was the Mohock Club, the name being borrowed from a tribe of savages. The President, who called himself Emperor of the Mohocks, wore a crescent on his forehead. Like the "Treize" of Balzac, the Mohocks declared war against the human race, and formed an offensive and defensive alliance among themselves. Beating the watch, attacking persons in the street, treating their prisoners—male and female—in the most barbarous and revolting manner, was regarded by them as a brilliant deed. Their rage was only appeased when they reached the ill-famed spots of which they had constituted themselves the protectors. The Mohocks underwent the same fate as the Duellists, the Terribles, and the Assassins: the rope broke up their Club. In a large city like London,

we may expect to find some of these illegal associations even up to recent times. Lord Chief Justice Holt spent a rackety youth, and had been a member of a Club of ruffians. One day, when he was presiding at the Old Bailey, a man was convicted of highway robbery. In the criminal, Holt recognised one of his old comrades, and believing that he was unknown, and perhaps excited by curiosity, he asked him what had become of the other members of the dangerous Club to which the prisoner had had the misfortune to belong. The poor devil gave a profound bow, and replied, with a heavy sigh: "Ah! they are all hanged, with the exception of your lordship and myself!"

Such is a history of a few old Clubs. At the present day, what a difference! Palaces of marble have been substituted for the humble taverns and coffee-houses which served as nests for the associations of the last century. The revolution as regards architecture and the system of management has been so great, that linguists have asked themselves if the name of Club can be given to establishments which offer so little resemblance with the congregation of good fellows defined by grave Dr. Johnson. I will not stop to discuss about a word, for I prefer to study at once the constitution, origin, and life of the modern club-houses.

CHAPTER II.

SUBSCRIPTION CLUBS — CROCKFORD — PIGEONS AT BROOKS'S — WHITE'S — PALL MALL — MODERN CLUBS — HOUSE COMMITTEES — THE KITCHEN AT THE REFORM — ORIGIN OF MODERN CLUBS — THE UNITED SERVICE — RAPID GROWTH OF CLUBS — UNIVERSITY CLUBS — THE ATHENÆUM — THE GARRICK — MR. THACKERAY AND MR. YATES — THE TRAVELLERS — THE ORIENTAL — MIXED CLUBS — POLITICAL CLUBS — THE REFORM AND THE CARLTON.

THE Clubs now existing in London are divided into two classes. There are some kept by a private person, who engages to supply the members with certain advantages in consideration of entrance money and an annual subscription. There are others which in no way resemble individual enterprises, for they are based on the absolute principle of responsibility. Let us dwell first on the former, which are the eldest, are called by the name of "Subscription Clubs," and form the transition between the old and new systems. They are only three in number, Brooks's, White's, and Boodle's, though, up to 1844, Crockford's existed. They are thus called after the name of the original proprietor, and are all more or less tainted with the social evil of gambling.

William Crockford began his career by keeping a fishmonger's stall in the Strand. Having gained a great deal of money, not so much by his trade as by gambling and betting on races, he eventually established a celebrated house, at which the *élite* of London society assembled after the Opera was over, and fabulous sums were lost and won there. Several gloomy episodes are connected with his "Hell," which, however, assumed a holiday appearance. A major in the Guards lost a heavy sum of money, and committed a forgery in consequence, which was discovered, and brought him to Newgate. Before the trial, he found means to escape, through the devotion of a servant, who came to see him in prison and changed clothes with him. Thus disguised, the major eluded the vigilance of the gaolers, and soon reached a place of safety, leaving behind him his worthy servant, who was tried and condemned to a year's imprisonment. As this affair created a sensation, Crockford under the circumstances spared neither efforts nor money to save one of the victims of gambling from the hands of justice. His Club was, after the event, still frequented by the highest nobility of England. To the attraction of play he added that of good eating; his suppers were excellent; the finest wines flowed in streams; and the head cook,—the celebrated Louis Eustache Ude,—was considered the greatest professor of the culinary art to be found in Europe. Crockford, who was surnamed

the Leviathan of Play, died enormously rich in 1844, and with him expired this *rouge-et-noir* house, disguised beneath the name of a Club, which had cast such a deplorable lustre around.

The three other Clubs, Brooks's, White's, and Boodle's, have never possessed such a decidedly gambling character. Brooks's was originally a coffee-house—some say an hotel—which, about the year 1770, was the meeting-place of the leaders of the Opposition. The political influence of this Club was so great that it constituted a species of government within government. Round the name of Brooks, who was the master of the house, clustered the far more celebrated names of Fox, Burke, Grenville, Windham, Grey, Selwyn, and Sheridan. It would lead us too far to relate the witticisms and anecdotes that made the reputation of this select assembly. One day when Sheridan left the Club, he met, in St. James's Street, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York. "We were just discussing the point," said the Duke, "whether you are a rogue or a fool." "I am between both," Sheridan replied, as he placed himself between the royal pair, and took each by the arm. Sheridan was thrice rejected when proposed for Brooks's Club: one black ball was sufficient for this, and this veto was each time deposited in the voting urn by Selden, on the pretext that Sheridan's father had been an actor. This obstacle was at length removed by the Prince

of Wales, who engaged Selden in a private conversation at the moment when the voting took place. A great amount of wit was expended in this Club, but I regret to add, that a great deal of money was also spent and lost. Though it did not entirely renounce its political hue, Brooks's became in course of time a tolerated gambling-house, where certain members of the aristocracy sought refuge to evade the law prohibiting gambling. In 1799, four well-feathered pigeons became members of the Club, with fortunes which, together, attained the enormous amount of two millions. In less than a year all four were entirely ruined, and one of them, a young man of noble family, was obliged to borrow of a club waiter eighteen-pence to pay the carriage of a hamper sent him by a country friend, who was ignorant of this sudden conversion of a millionnaire into a beggar. But what on earth did he want in this Club?

White's, in St. James's Street, like Brooks's, is one of the oldest Clubs in London. It owes its origin to a man of the name of White, who, in 1698, kept at the same spot a coffee, or as it was then called, a chocolate-house. The Club, properly so called, only dates from 1736, and it was the gathering-place of the Tory party. It is less celebrated than Brooks's for witticisms, for, according to Walter Scott's observation, the Tories are generally less jovial companions than the

Whigs, and the illustrious novelist, in spite of his opinions, sought the society of the latter when he wished to render himself amused. White's, however, knew some splendid days during the brilliant period of Pitt, Dundas, Rose, and Canning. Pitt used to make great fun there of a well-known mystification, to which his friend Dundas fell a victim during a political trip in Scotland. The latter, who was a Minister at the time, sent for a barber, while he was staying in Edinburgh, and the Scotch Figaro, before beginning his task, made himself the echo of the dissatisfaction then prevailing in the city and a part of the country against the statesman, by saying ironically, "We are much obliged to you, Mr. Dundas, for the part you have played in London." "What, are you a politician?" Dundas asked, emphatically; "I sent for a barber." "Oh, very good, I will shave you," the practitioner replied, with a bow. He really shaved one cheek of the Minister, and then suddenly passed the back of the razor across his neck, exclaiming, "There, traitor, that is for you!" After doing which, he ran out of the house at full speed. Dundas thought for a moment that his throat was really cut, and shouted for help. The news that the Minister was assassinated spread through the whole city, but the alarm was soon converted into a general outburst of laughter, and the barber became for a day the hero of the popular favour. Pitt, in allusion to this event, was fond of asking

Dundas whether he was quite sure of having his head on his shoulders. But these mental diversions were combined from an early period with games of a worse character, and the arms of the Club have been described by a wit as "dice on a field *vert*," and the motto, "*Cogit amor nummi.*" At the beginning of the present century, White's was extremely rich, and in 1813 it gave to the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and the other allied sovereigns, a dinner that cost no less than 9849*l.* Three weeks later the same Club banqueted the Duke of Wellington with equal splendour. White's is still in existence, and indeed occupies a very stately mansion in St. James's Street, but at the present day it is only celebrated for its dinners, and the friendly feeling kept up among the members, who are all rich, quiet, and conservative.

I will not dwell any longer on the subscription Clubs, which offer but a slight interest in comparison with the Club-houses of the new régime. These establishments, kept by a master, and whose members contributed an annual sum to cover the expenses, under the surveillance of a committee, have been recently succeeded by institutions of an entirely different character. There is a new class of Club, the members of which combine to hire or build a house, engage servants, and supply themselves at cost price with all that is sold at considerable profit in restaurants and

hotels. These Club-houses are true aristocratic households.

The first time I walked in London in the vicinity of St. James's Park, I was struck by the sight of splendid houses, standing at a certain distance from each other, and which gave to this part of the town a character of wealth and majesty. They were in all styles, Greek, Roman, Italian, simple or decorated, but had a family resemblance to each other. My surprise was augmented in Pall Mall, where palaces succeeded palaces. I saw all around me colonnades, porticos, bas reliefs, friezes, and other architectural ornaments. As these noble buildings, however, had not the character of public edifices, and as I was still under the influence of the ideas Frenchmen form as to the English aristocracy, I asked myself what old families could be rich enough to stand such ruinous expenses in keeping up establishments of this size. An Englishman undertook to dispel my illusions, by telling me that each of these princely residences was occupied, as he said, by a collective Lord. I had in fact before me the Club-houses of London, the palaces erected on the principle of association for material comforts and the pleasures of social life. They are at once hotels, eating-houses, cafés, reading-rooms, and libraries. Such establishments are not the property of an individual, but belong to numerous bodies of partners. The Club-houses represent the true monuments of the

age, and the oldest of them do not date back beyond 1826. The stranger especially stops in surprise in front of the Carlton Club, an immense edifice, built from the designs of Sir Robert Smirke, and which reminds him of the Library of St. Mark, at Venice. The profusion of ornaments only yields here to the richness of the material: columns of polished red granite, coupled two and two, decorate the façade of the building, which is surmounted by a terrace, surrounded by a stone balustrade of severe and yet elegant design. In the same street, Pall Mall, is the Army and Navy Club, whose style English architects have borrowed from the Cornaro palace: the walls are covered with old naval and military trophies, above which runs a frieze loaded with arabesques, foliage, and figures. These two Clubs eclipse, though they do not obliterate, other and somewhat older buildings —the Reform Club, built in 1840, after the designs of Sir C. Barry, the United Service, the Athenæum, the Travellers', the Oxford and Cambridge, the University, the Union, and Arthur's. If the modern Club-houses attract the eye by the mass, extent, richness, and external beauties of the architecture, the visitor is no less astounded by the pomp and elegance displayed in the interior of these establishments.

You have scarce passed the peristyle ere you find yourself in a lobby, guarded by two servants, the hall porter and his assistant. It is their duty

to watch that no one enters the house, except those whose names are entered in a book. As a general rule, these two functionaries, dressed in black, and white neckcloths, have under their orders one or two pages in livery, whose duty it is to carry messages and letters to the Club members, whilst the stranger waits for an answer in a reception-room. If by special favour he is permitted to visit the establishment, he will then enter the hall, where the architects have lavished, even more than elsewhere, all the resources of their own art and of statuary. I will quote, as a delicious effect of light, and as type of what the English called the chaste style, the hall of the Conservative, which is lighted by a circular glass roof, and thus seems to have the dome of heaven as a cupola. As a specimen of a different style, the hall of the Reform Club, all lustrous with marble and gold, is admirable. From a pavement of scagliola mosaic spring up saffron-coloured columns, which support a gallery and an open ceiling. Maple or mahogany doors open into the different apartments on the ground floor—the morning-room, the reading or news-room, and the dining-rooms, all of which have mirrors of extraordinary height, ceilings adorned with festoons and cornices, rich encaustic paintings, immense gilt branched chandeliers, and sofas dear to indolence. A staircase leads to the two or three other floors of the house; some architects have striven to bestow all

the wealth of decoration on these marble or stone staircases, while others, despairing of making such an object agreeable to the sight, have expended all their skill in hiding it. On the first floor are the drawing-room, library, and the accessory rooms.* The drawing-room, in most of the Clubs, displays a luxury in furniture and ornamentation which the English themselves have qualified as extravagant. The walls are covered with velvet paper. The columns are of Sienna marble. The ceiling is decorated with gilt moulding, and the oak floor is covered with a soft Turkey carpet: in a word, all affects an air of splendour and ostentation which defies the eye of the millionnaire: indeed, nothing finer can be seen in the Queen's palace. The library is distinguished by the number of books, the size of the room, and pilasters of grey or green marble, terminating in bronze capitals. On the second or third floor are the billiard rooms, while the upper part is occupied by the bedrooms of the servants and other officials. In the Club-houses the architect proposed to combine the character of a mansion with the wants of a first-class hotel. Hence we must not overlook the kitchen, which is frequently the greatest marvel in these establishments, through

* These accessories are the smoking-room, the least decorated in the house, and the card-room, which has been carefully made small in order to limit the number of players. Games of chance, strictly so called, are prohibited in the modern club-houses.

its cleanliness, the brilliancy of the fires, the movement of the spits and cooks, and the dimensions of the tables and dressers. In the basement of some of these houses there is also a steam-engine to pump water to the upper floors, apparatus for distributing heat through the various apartments—in short, a perfect mechanical system by which the house lives, if I may be allowed the expression, like the fairy palaces in Perrault's tales.*

The modern Club-houses differ from the old subscription Clubs in the fact that they are no longer, as formerly, enterprises bearing the name of an individual who, in consideration of an annual subscription from each member, undertook to defray the expenses and pocketed the profits. At the present day the Club-men are not subscribers, but co-proprietors of their Club. For the average sum of twenty pounds entrance money, and ten guineas a year, each member, admitted by ballot, can go where he likes, do what he pleases in the house, read, write, dine alone or with a friend, mix in conversation or withdraw into a corner with a

* A few figures will give an idea of the importance and wealth of these institutions. The Athenæum cost in building alone 35,000*l.*, the furniture 5000*l.*, the linen and plate 2500*l.*, the library 4000*l.*, and the stock of wine in the cellars represents, it is said, an average of 3500*l.* to 4000*l.* The establishment pays annually upwards of 800*l.* for coals and other combustibles, 1000*l.* for gas, oil, and wax candles, 400*l.* for newspapers and magazines, 240*l.* for writing paper and pens, 80*l.* for ice, and 2000*l.* for wines and spirits. The cellar alone of the United Service is estimated at 7722*l.*

newspaper, or the last new magazine. At the Club, he is at home: as twelve hundredth part of the master of the house, he commands an army of servants, from the footman in laced coat, velvet breeches and silk stockings, up to the little page with gilt buttons, whom a duchess might envy. He has his cook, his bath, his plate, and his easy chair by the fire, where he can build castles in the air, although the fiction is a reality, for he exercises a right over all that this palace out of the Arabian Nights possesses. The Club governs itself by virtue of a committee chosen among the members, and which generally consists of from thirty to forty persons. From three to eight of them form the head of this elective authority, and meet once a week to settle financial affairs, make contracts with the tradesmen, engage or dismiss servants, and inquire into any complaints that may be made by Club-members. This general committee also prepares the annual reports, which are printed, and issued to all the members of the association. As one committee could not extend its surveillance over all the branches of domestic economy, it is assisted by sub-committees, which have a special character, and are called house-committees. There is the wine-committee, composed of connoisseurs of that article, which looks after the cellar and bottling; and there is the book-committee, which manages the library department. In Clubs where there are billiard tables, a billiard committee

is chosen among the patrons of the game. These committees are assisted by a secretary, who is also intrusted with the official correspondence of the Club. So much for the direction: the rest is handed over to the care of the house-steward, who has under his orders the waiters and other servants. Now the resemblance between the constitution of the Club-houses and that of representative government in England can be easily traced.

From an economical point of view, the organisation of these modern establishments offers more than one advantage. The members of the Club obtain at cost price food, drink, and all the other amenities of luxury, and no one derives any profit from what they consume. Not only do the members pay no toll to a middleman, but, as their purchases are made on a large scale, they obtain objects of superior quality of a cheaper rate. It has been said that the English of olden times clubbed to spend money, and the English of to-day to save it, and this is true, at least with those who have contracted any luxurious habits. In the dining room there is a daily bill of fare, from which each member selects what he prefers, and the dishes come up from the kitchen by means of a machine called a "lift." The cook is one of the principal personages in the establishment, and most frequently a Frenchman, who deserves the title of an *artiste*, through his talent, education, and mode of life.*

* The most celebrated of all was, a few years ago, M. Soyer,

You can have an excellent dinner at a Club for the same sum which a bad one at a tavern costs you. In addition to the comfort of good cheer must be added the pleasures of a well-laid table, a magnificently lighted room, and splendid attendance. It appears too, if we may judge from the experience of the Clubs, that sobriety is developed in the midst of abundance, and that a man covets in a lesser degree those superfluities of life, which he constantly has before his eyes, if not under his hand. Statistics of the expenses of the Junior United in 1839, proves that 29·527 dinners cost on an average, two shillings and three pence. The reports of three other large Clubs show also that the quantity of wine drunk by each person was, during six years, a little under a pint a day. I certainly notice, it is true, a slight difference between these later accounts and those of some

head cook of the Reform Club, and author of a book entitled "Gastronomic Regeneration." The idea of this immortal work gourmands say occurred to him one day when looking in the library of a noble lord at the works of Shakspeare, Milton, and Johnson, splendidly bound, but covered with dust and neglected, while a cookery book bore marks of honourable service, for it was consulted daily. "That," he said to himself, "is the road to fame." Soyer produced an entire revolution in the culinary art; and he introduced the mechanical arrangement in the kitchen of the Reform Club which is considered a masterpiece. He was the first to employ steam in turning spits and other apparatus, in warming plates, browning joints, &c. Soyer was also an economist, a musician, and a judge of paintings. During the Crimean war he was engaged to improve the cookery of the English army, and at his death he left some valuable pictures.

other Clubs, the Windham for instance, which is the most expensive of all,* but such variations are not of a nature to invalidate the principle. The habit of association has this result, that the English of a certain class have long ceased to display their wealth by the extent of their expenditure. The Duke of Wellington could often be seen dining at the Senior United off a single joint, and one day when charged fifteen pence instead of a shilling, he insisted on the error being rectified. The duke was no miser and three pence more or less was nothing to a man who had an income of £100,000 a year; but he wished to prevent any abuse for the sake of his brothers in arms who, being not so rich as himself, might, perhaps, not have dared to resist an overcharge, "Man does not live on bread alone," and the Club-houses, while rendering the comforts of material life more accessible to men of moderate fortune, have not on that account neglected the pleasures and nourishment of the mind. In 1844 the Athenæum spent in subscriptions to English and foreign newspapers and magazines the sum of £471 some odd shillings. In the same year the library of this Club consisted of 20,300 volumes, and five hundred a year is devoted to increasing this collection of books, maps and engravings. We

* Lord Nugent introduced a high tariff in order to keep Irishmen out. This club derived its name from William Windham, an eminent politician, and Secretary of State in 1801.

have thus seen the objects of the Club-houses, and will now proceed to inquire into their origin.

The idea of modern Clubs, which exist in such great numbers in London and other towns of Great Britain, is a military one. Officers of the English army had for a long time recognised the saving that results from the principle of association when applied to the table. They were aware that their individual pay, if spent separately, would have scarce sufficed for the necessities of life: while by forming a common mess table, they obtain not only necessaries, but even the delicacies of luxury. In 1818, peace produced a reduction in the army, and a large number of officers, being placed on half-pay, were compelled to leave the messes to which they belonged. Thrown suddenly out of their regular habits, these gentlemen whose incomes were very small, saw themselves with horror the prey of hotel and boarding-house keepers. With the majority of them absence had relaxed family ties, and yet they had contracted in barracks, camps, and under canvas a desire for society. Their place of refuge was at that time, Slaughter's Coffee House, in St. Martin's-lane, an excellent house, where they had met before in their days of prosperity, but which no longer suited half-pay officers. Under these circumstances the thought of the mess naturally presented itself to their minds, and General Lord Lynedoch, and five officers drew up a system of association applicable

to civil life. The result of their deliberations was the foundation in the same year (1815) of a Club, which was, as it were, the germ of these institutions, and where old brothers in arms could meet in a common room to talk over their reminiscences. The military founders, knowing that many Naval officers were as reduced or embarrassed as themselves, attracted them to their association, which then took the name of the United Service. Subscriptions were raised to build a Clubhouse, which stood at the corner of Charles Street, James's, and was opened in 1819 : but as the number of candidates was annually augmented, about 1825, it was proposed to build a larger house for the Club. A new edifice after the design of Nash, the architect of the Queen's palace, was therefore built in 1828, at the corner of Pall Mall and Waterloo Place, and it soon received nearly 1,500 members, among whom figured the Duke of Wellington. Great names and glorious reminiscences for England attach to this first Club.

The success was contagious ; a rule being introduced in 1826, which refused admission to the United Service to officers below the rank of major in the army and commander in the navy, another military association was formed on the same basis and adopted the name of the Junior United. The new Club soon counted 1500 effective members and 400 supernumeraries, recruited from among officers of the lower grades. The impulse had been given, and it did not stop until the day when

these institutions had embraced all the higher branches of the army. The officers of the Household Brigade who, as early as 1809, had formed a Club on the old system, emulated their brothers in arms in the adoption of the new economical system, and built in Pall Mall a tall, narrow, unpretending house, which took the name of the Guards' Club. As these three military Clubs, however, did not suffice for all the officers of the army, a magnificent building was built in 1839 at the corner of Pall Mall and St. James's Street, for the Army and Navy Club, which offered a shelter to officers of both services. One result of such institutions, which are found not only in London but throughout great Britain (for there is not a garrison town which has not its United Service) was to withdraw officers from tavern life. The West end *cafés* only exist for foreigners; for the Englishman does not like these establishments, where the society is mixed. Each Club, on the contrary, has a peculiar turn of conversation, which *sent son cru*, as Madame de Sevigné would say. In the military Clubs the talk is mainly about promotions in the army, manœuvres, campaigns, and battles. These places of amusement thus become in some cases schools for mutual instruction, where the man who knows more instructs him who knows less. The Duke of Cambridge, when chairman, some years back, of a banquet at the Junior United, took advantage of a toast to give some excellent advice

to young officers. It was very curious to see a Prince of the Blood, himself head of the army, inviting the free discussion—I might almost say the free criticism—of the Club, on the acts of the Government, and he only asked favour for their good intentions.

The example given by the army was speedily followed by the civil element of English society. The United Service was scarce established, ere the economic advantages produced by the system inspired other classes with a taste for association. The influence first affected persons who had contracted family ties and habits beyond the family itself. At the period to which I refer, many members of the Universities who, during their collegiate life, had been accustomed every day to dine under the same roof and meet in the same lecture and reading rooms, found themselves in London wretchedly solitary. The idea occurred to them of founding a Club to which they gave the name of the United University, and which was installed in a heavy building with the pious and venerable air of a D.D. Another building, of more elegant and ornate design, was built in 1835, in Pall Mall, for the same class, and took the name of the Oxford and Cambridge—it was in fact a scion of the two celebrated universities—*et dulces reminiscitur Argos.* Seven bas-reliefs, executed by a celebrated sculptor, Mr. Nicholl, decorate the medallions over the windows, and

represent Homer, Horace, Shakspeare, Milton, Newton, and Virgil, the natural patrons of this classical *cœnobium*. The two buildings well express the character of the two Clubs. The United University is chiefly composed of the noble fathers of learning, of serious M.P.s who have enjoyed a good education, and of a part of the Anglican clergy. The Oxford and Cambridge prefers to offer an asylum to young men who, while paying their respects to the Muses and Minerva, as the bas reliefs indicate, are not insensible to the attractions of London life. The principle of affinity, which, as we have seen, presided over the formation of the old Clubs, has not ceased to exert an influence over the distribution of the modern Club-houses. The Members of the Universities—I chiefly refer to those who have grown grey over their books—would feel ill at ease in the noise and frivolity of a fashionable drawing-room. At the Club, they can, on the other hand, enjoy all the delicacies of luxury and good cheer with friends who pursue the same liberal career, and whose conversation turns on the same favourite subjects. I was requested to notice, however, that the grave doctors, in spite of their taste for the sacred founts of antiquity, did not disdain delicate wines, and that their cellar was one of the choicest in London. This habit of associating in groups must have strengthened in Great Britain the division into classes, and have concentrated the circle of human

acquirements, which thus gain in depth what they lose in surface. Still I regret that the chosen men of England have slightly lost out of sight the advice St. Paul offers—to be simple with the simple.

Next to the Army and Clergy comes in the social hierarchy, the Law. From 1828 to 1831, the family of lawyers built in Bell Yard, Chancery Lane, a Law Club-house, where you find, as in the other Clubs, rooms for refreshment and recreation; but the principal characteristics of the establishment are a reading-room, in which are found all the papers and magazines of interest to the profession, a carefully selected library, and lectures in various branches of the law. The subscription is light, being only five guineas a year; but this Club has only 400 members, for most of the lawyers being at the same time men of liberal education, belong either to the United University, the Oxford and Cambridge, or the Athenæum.

With the history of the last named Club are connected the names of Sir H. Davy, President of the Royal Society; of the Earl of Aberdeen, President of the Society of Antiquaries; of Sir T. Lawrence, President of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture; of Sir James Macintosh, Sir Walter Scott, Samuel Rogers, Croker and other men celebrated in literature, science, the arts, or civil life. On March 12, 1823, John Wilson Croker, at that time Secretary to the Admiralty, wrote a letter to

Sir Humphry Davy, in which he represented that the Clubs had already absorbed a great portion of English society, and that it was urgent to found an institution of the same nature for members of the liberal professions, round whom a vacuum was already beginning to be felt. The next year a committee was formed, composed of all the illustrious names England counted at that day, and, in 1830, the Club, which had been temporarily lodged in a hired house, took triumphal possession of the edifice built in Waterloo Place, after the designs of Decimus Burton, and which is at this day the Athenæum. The number of members was first fixed at 1200, but soon exceeded that number. Being a member of the Athenæum is still considered by some Englishmen a title of distinction; most assuredly all the members do not cultivate the arts and sciences, but they are supposed to love and foster them.

Another literary but especially dramatic Club stands under the protection of Garrick. Three years ago this Club was violently affected by one of those intestine dissensions, I might almost say family quarrels, which the English call a storm in a tea-cup. The origin of all the disturbance was an article published in a little paper, "Town Talk," by a young Club-member, Mr. Edmund Yates, and in which another important member of the Club, Mr. Thackeray, fancied he saw an insult to his character. The committee interfered, and

summoned the author of the article to apologise to Mr. Thackeray, or leave the Club. The affair threatened to degenerate into a trial, for Mr. Yates, whose name had been erased from the Club lists, determined to appeal against this dictatorial measure in a court of law. He thought it best, however, to withdraw, and the decision of the Committee was maintained, though blamed in a general meeting by Charles Dickens and other members of the Garrick. I mention this fact to show with what stern care the committees of the London Clubs watch over the observation of certain social rules. The Club is regarded as a home, a domestic sanctuary, whose mysteries or spirit of fraternity cannot be violated with impunity. Criticising a member, describing a conversation held at the Club, in a word, any breach of that confidence which well-bred persons are bound to place in each other, may become, in some cases, a motive for ostracism. The Garrick Club is situated, as is but proper, in the vicinity of the great theatres, and has upwards of 350 members.

The Travellers' Club, though it cannot be classified among the professional Clubs, has a certain stamp of unity: only foreigners and travellers are admitted to it, and many people can still remember among the distinguished foreigners Talleyrand, who visited the Club every night to play a game of whist or écarté. In the English opinion the

celebrated diplomatist was but an indifferent whist-player, but the imperturbability of his face rendered him formidable, and gave him a great advantage over the other players. The idea of opening a Club to foreigners recommended by public titles or private letters was brought forward by Lord Londonderry. Englishmen are only eligible to the Travellers' when they have won their spurs as tourists, and they must have gone five hundred miles away from London, although of course the further they have travelled the better. The countries they have visited, the travelling adventures, the manners of the different nations, and encounters with wild beasts, form a favourite topic of conversation among the members. This Club also boasts of being extremely select, and counts among its members the flower of both Houses of Parliament. To borrow the geographical style, the Travellers' is bounded on the right by the Athenæum, on the left by the Reform, in that country of Pall Mall, which is the classic soil of such coteries.

The Oriental Club, which has also a certain geographical tinge, stands in a corner of Hanover Square; and here another class of travellers finds a refuge against isolation—an oasis in the desert of London. I mean gentlemen established in India, who return to spend some time in the metropolis for business or pleasure. At the Club they find themselves in a familiar country, for it

is also frequented by military or civil officers of the old East India Company. It is curious to notice among the members of this club the change which the overpowering climate of India produces on the Anglo-Saxon constitution. All bear to a greater or less extent, beneath the pale sky of London, the stamp of that other sun, which has wrinkled their foreheads and rendered their faces yellow and emaciated. During the Indian massacres the Oriental offered an affecting scene: each mail brought sinister news, and the members of the Club, who were so well acquainted with Delhi and the other threatened English possessions, could believe themselves once again at those spots.

The Travellers' and the Oriental form a species of link between the professional and mixed Clubs, that is to say, between those whose members are only invited by the attraction of pleasure and conversation, perhaps, too, by a conformity of rank, fortune, and more or less frivolous tastes. Among the latter may be mentioned the Arthur, the Parthenon,* and the Union. Once on a time the Union was a political Club, and boasted of counting in its ranks 400 members of the two Houses. James Smith tells us how he used to hear in the morning-room of the Union stormy debates, in which Robert Peel and Wellington

Obiit, 1862.

were in turn raised to the skies or sent down to Hades. But with the course of time the influence has fallen like a crown from the head of this King of Clubs: and the members content themselves now-a-days with discussing the movements of the Funds, or watching the carriages flying along Cockspur Street. The Union has at any rate retained its reputation for good dinners, and is still one of the dearest clubs.

The system of Club-houses has not as yet extended to the middle classes, properly so called: there are, it is true, the City Club, the Gresham, and the Whittington, at which the great merchants meet, but as for the tradesmen, they content themselves with spending at a tavern the short hours they can steal from business or domestic duties. The working-classes, on the contrary, would appear much better disposed to follow, to a certain extent, the example given them by the aristocracy. A working-men's Club was established about four years ago at Salford, near Manchester; two of the largest and best cottages in the parish being knocked into one to form the Club-house. The architect then divided the interior into several rooms responding to the various requirements of the institution: these are a committee-room, a conversation room, a washing-apartment, a news room, a library and a class-room, in which lectures are delivered on the different branches of elementary instruction. Of

course we cannot expect to find in this working-men's Club the splendour of the Athenæum or the West End Clubs; but the building is lighted with gas, well warmed and furnished with that modest simplicity which does not exclude good taste. The intention of the founders was to supply workmen with comfort and amusements, under conditions which the best public-house could not supply. At the same time they wished to hold at bay the dangers and artificial temptations of the pot-house. In these clubs, no one makes a profit on the articles consumed, and hence people are not urged to spend money. The subscription which confers the privilege of membership is very small—but a penny a-week—and in return for this tea and coffee are supplied at cost price. This new Club, to which a savings'-bank is attached, has already borne good fruit: it has raised the moral dignity, and developed a taste for saving among certain workmen, who formerly squandered their time and money in tap-rooms. The same experiment has been tried elsewhere, namely, at the picturesque village of Hampstead, and in some parts of Scotland. Several English moralists have asked themselves whether such houses, serving as a meeting-place for town artisans and country labourers, ought not to be opened all over the United Kingdom. When workmen are married, their natural Club is their family; but most of the young workmen are condemned to a life of celibacy, and what awaits

them after a long day's work?—a poorly furnished bedroom, a fireless hearth, dull walls and solitude. To fly from this gloomy sight, they run to the beershop, where another enemy is lurking for them in the shape of intemperance. Between these two dangers the Club-house offers itself, a sort of home for all, with a good fire, bright gas-light, pleasant companions, who talk over the news, and for those who can read, the poor man's best friends, books, newspapers, and periodicals of every description.*

The new social system of association must necessarily, in the course of time, embrace another family of Clubs, which are contemporaneous, as we have seen, with English liberty—I mean the political Clubs. In 1830, the country was aroused by that great measure the Reform Bill, a conquest of the liberal party, which met with strenuous opposition and support. The alarmed Conservatives founded in the same year the Carlton, while the chiefs of the advanced party assembled at Gwydyr House, Whitehall, waiting till Mr. Barry had built them in Pall Mall a real palace under the name of the Reform Club.

* Among the professional club-houses founded for the lower orders, I must not forget the Cabmen's Club. The drivers of public carriages have hired in Bell Street, Paddington, a house which is open daily from 8 A.M. to 11 P.M. to the members, and where they enjoy the advantages of a reading-room, a library, and refreshment room. Since then similar houses have been opened in other streets of London.

Born on the same day, and from the same political event, the two Clubs have continued to live side by side like embittered brothers. The Reform is the head of the liberal party, just as the Carlton is the head-quarters of the Tories. The most interesting time at which to watch the life in political Clubs is at night, during the Session. The news of what is going on at the Westminster Palace reaches the interior of the Clubhouse as if borne on electric wires. Those members who take the greatest interest in public affairs, watch till a late hour the progress of the debates, and await the result of the voting. The Reform Club is composed of men of talent who sympathise more or less with the doctrines of Messrs. Bright, Cobden, Roebuck, Gladstone, and Milner Gibson. This congregation of 1500 members has had considerable influence during the last few years upon the progress of opinion in England; but the English are too thoroughly familiarised with public life to force the action of certain springs. The majority of the members of the Reform Club do not aspire to play any part in the events that make and unmake parliamentary majorities; attracted by a simple harmony of views and feelings round the nucleus of liberal ideas, they content themselves with enjoying the material advantages offered them by domestic association, while, however, supporting their friends in power, or in the opposition ranks, by monetary sacrifices, by their personal influence,

and at times by their advice. Daughters of liberty, these political unions have powerfully contributed since their foundation to strengthen in Great Britain freedom of speech and action. We must not, in fact, lose out of sight that Clubs, to whatever opinion they belong, are as sacred and inviolable in the eyes of the English law as the private domicile; for a people which is so fortunate as to govern itself, is supposed only to interfere in the affairs of Government in order to improve them.

We may expect to find in the London political Clubs an incarnation of the two principles that divide every constitutional government, resistance and progress. The Carlton, so called after the terrace on which it stood before being transplanted to Pall Mall is the citadel of privilege, and the persons whom the English call the "Tritons" of the Conservative party assemble there. There too are prepared long beforehand the schemes that are to raise the Tories to power on the ruins of a Whig cabinet, and there too, at the time of a general election, the measures are concerted and the funds voted which are destined to set in motion all the strength of the old counties. The Carlton includes Conservatives of all shades, from the Tories of the old school, who obstinately adhere to the principles of Lord Eldon and William Pitt, down to the younger men, who advance as far as Sir Robert Peel. The majority of them, however,

follow the banner of Mr. Disraeli: at any rate, they are men who hold a high position through wealth or character; and from their ranks have come, and may still come any day, ministries which are not deficient in brilliant names or the authority of talent. The Carlton has, to a certain extent, another Club, the Conservative, under it, which was originally merely a training school for candidates waiting till the hour arrived for them to be admitted to the Carlton. Gradually, however, the spirit of classification which presides over the entire English society, permanently raised the members of the Conservative among the *dii minores*, or, as they are called here, the stars of second magnitude. The clever tactics of party have, moreover, recognised that the members of both Clubs had an importance in their own sphere: a man who is eclipsed in London often stands in the first rank in his county. "There is," an Englishman said to me, "the same difference between politicians as you notice between the dome of St. Paul's and a village steeple: the one is assuredly loftier than the other, but for the villagers the steeple is far more evident than the dome of the imposing edifice which they never saw and probably never will see." The Conservative being founded on the same principles as the Carlton, the chiefs of the Tory party belong to both Clubs, where they find useful allies. In elections, if the Conservative furnishes fewer candidates than its

elder brother, it at least recruits the forces that are to insure the former the victory, and consequently the life of many eminent statesmen is associated with both Clubs. A joke of Lord Melbourne's is still quoted at the Conservative, when he was Premier, and the members of the Club asked him cursorily what he intended to do: "I do not know," he replied, "for I have not yet read the papers." His Lordship wished thus to ridicule the liberality with which the English papers attributed to him every morning all sorts of intentions.

CHAPTER III.

ADMISSION TO CLUBS—THE CLUB-MAN—INFLUENCES OF CLUB LIFE—THEODORE HOOK—THE WREKIN—DOUGLAS JERROLD—OUR CLUB—THE UNSUCCESSFUL CLUB—THE SAVAGE CLUB—THE DEBATING CLUBS—THE ALPINE CLUB—FREE AND EASIES—THE STORY TELLERS—CHARACTER OF ENGLISH SOCIETY.

We have seen what the modern Club-houses are, and have now to indicate the mode of admission. In spite of the great number of Club-houses which have been opened recently, and are being started almost daily in London, candidates continue to crowd up, and besiege the doors of these palaces, in which strict economy is enthroned under the mask of luxury. On the list of candidates for the United Service, no less than two thousand names may frequently be read. At each vacancy a day is fixed for the ballot, and the first stipulation is that the candidates should bear an honourable character. In some Clubs, one black ball in ten, in others, a single black ball, is sufficient to cause the rejection of a candidate. Some of these establishments have the fashion of posting up in the coffee-room the list of rejections:

but such a measure, which publishes and prolongs the defeat, is generally blamed. The unfortunate candidate most frequently consoles himself, it is true, by attributing his disgrace to the competition, and then again, as English society is divided into strata, a man who has failed at one Club may succeed in another better suited to his means, career, and relations in society; when admitted, he has only to pay his entrance-money, which varies according to the Club, and conform to the statutes. These rules differ more or less, according to the character of the Club; but there is one general regulation—that no member is allowed to bring his dog into the house.

The great number of Clubs existing in London, and I have not named them all, sufficiently proves how greatly these institutions respond to the social want and the British character: for the Englishman is as strict about the division of time as he is of that of labour. He has during the day his busy and his leisure hours; the first being devoted to his profession, the latter to his amusements. The leisure hours are spent at the Club, in more or less witty conversation, in jokes, reading, and honourable relaxation. I will not assert, however, with some essayists, that conversation is the principal attraction of modern Clubs. If the Englishman be the most clubbable of men, according to Johnson's expression, it is not so much because he likes to speak, as that he pos-

sesses the art of holding his tongue. He respects your silence, but he expects you to respect his. Where else could you find what may be seen daily in English Clubs, two men meeting every morning and evening, who spend long hours together and yet never open their lips to talk about their domestic affairs? I ask myself, on the other hand, whether the success of British Clubs is really based, as people say, on a footing of sociability. There are other nations quite as sociable as the English, and yet with them aggregation speedily degenerates into serfdom. The Englishman possesses the extreme advantage of remaining himself in the midst of a group of friends or companions, and there is no reason to fear that he will ever sacrifice his liberty for any consideration. Without being deficient in politeness—at least the politeness of his own country—he can isolate himself in a crowd, attend to his business or pleasures, or come and go exactly as he likes. What he wishes to be excused in himself he tolerates in others: in a word, the Englishman only becomes associated with others in order to increase his independence along with his comfort, and to strengthen his self-esteem.

The establishment of Clubhouses has recently created a curious and thoroughly British type—the Club-man. For him, nothing exists beyond the radius of Pall Mall; and any individual who does not belong to a Club, is not a man. He has

made of his Club, his house, his nest, his society. Though he does not sleep there, he turns up at the Club about nine in the morning, and remains till midnight. There he receives and writes his letters, there he dresses, reads the papers, walks from room to room, or stations himself at a window. If you pass during the day in front of the palace where he has established his domicile, you are sure to see his happy face smiling through an enormous window pane. From this window he watches silently for hours and hours everything that takes place, as he says, in the Great World's Club—for with him everything assumes the form of his favourite idea. He may possibly be ignorant how his own affairs are going on, but he knows to a nicety how the affairs of the Club are managed. He takes an interest in purchases and the slightest domestic details; if you ask him in what year, month, day, or hour the best Club claret was bottled, he will imperturbably give you the details. With him there are no good luncheons or dinners save those he enjoys at the marble table of the Club, and always at the same spot. He knows every book in the library, not because he has read them, but because he has convinced himself they are there. His relations with the literary members of the Club put him in a position to tell you the author of an anonymous book, the date of publication, and the opinion of connoisseurs. He will speak to you familiarly

about his friend the Duke of ——, simply because he is one of the members of the Club, and the friends of our friends are our friends. His great experience enables him to predict with the exactitude of a barometer the tempests which the debate must occasion on certain days, and a single glance at the company in the morning room is sufficient for him to determine beforehand the opinion of the Club, and the number of the majority. Actively mixed up in the intrigues, coteries, and quarrels of the house, he always ends by putting on the political livery of the leader. His oratory invariably begins in this way, "the Club thinks, the Club wishes, the Club decides." With years, he becomes rooted like old trees in the native soil—I mean the soil of the Club. If from ten o'clock till midnight there is only one member in the drawing-room, it is safe to be he asleep in his chair by the fireside. If he die, he consoles himself by saying that some of the members will follow him to the grave, and that his name will figure on a tablet in the list of "members deceased." That is his epitaph, his funeral oration.

I was introduced at a London Club—the rules of English society forbid my saying which—to one of these enthusiastic Club-men. He was a grey-haired man, with a respectable face, perfectly well bred, and moving in the best society. He drew me a picture of his life, which was at

then learned what poverty was—the house, the furniture, the company, all appeared to me mean. But I may refer before all to the mental poverty; his library only contained 2000 volumes, and he received but six papers every morning, among which only one came from the Continent. It was enough to make me fancy that the world was dead. Although his fortune was twice or thrice larger than mine, I, in my heart, pitied the wretchedness of the poor fellow, who had all the annoyance of wealth, and yet did not obtain the real fruit. When I returned home, that is to say, to the Club, I felt like a king out of business, who, after several years of exile, found himself once again in his palace."

The Clubs, it will be seen, have recently transformed the conditions of wealth, but they have exerted no less influence on English life and society. Among the happy changes they have produced, I will mention first of all the blending of ranks and professions: they have shortened distances, and thrown down the barriers erected between the different ranks of the aristocracy. The partnership among gentlemen of very marked degrees has effaced, at any rate, partially, the pride in which the nobles of old England isolated themselves. Every day groups may be seen in Clubhouses, whose elements would formerly have appeared as hostile as oil and water. A bishop, a humble rector of the Anglican Church, a savant,

an artist, a literary man, a manufacturer, a merchant, and a peer of the realm, now sit down in front of the same fire—I might almost say at the same table. What would Lady Hester Stanhope have said to this in her day?—and that is not so very long ago. The mere idea of such a confusion of rank would have appeared to her a signal for the most disastrous of social revolutions. This revolution stops, I am bound to confess, at a certain limit, as Clubhouses only exist for a certain class, and are ranked in categories. Such as they are, these establishments represent English society in miniature: liberty must be sought there rather than levelling, but the most humble member, once admitted, enjoys the same independence, and the same ease, as the man most favoured by fortune or birth. "Here," one of the members of the Athenæum said to me, "there are no kings, though there are crowned heads:" alluding to the numerous celebrities belonging to the Club.

I am bound to place the inconveniences face to face with these advantages. Some moralists have reproached these institutions with relaxing family ties, and especially with keeping men aloof from female society. According to them, the Clubs had created a new variety of the human race, whom the English designate by the name of men of men. This accusation greatly disturbed the partisans of the Clubs, and they tried to answer it. They drew attention to the fact that the drawing-

rooms of these establishments, decorated with all the wealth of luxury, but which wanted the crown of feminine wit and grace, were generally deserted during the evening: whence they concluded that men were at that time where they ought to be—with their family or at parties. A young Clubman, in whose presence a celebrated humorist was one day deploring the injurious influence of Clubs on the social relations of the two sexes, answered, "Women! why it is only here that you can learn the art of pleasing them." He meant to say that men contracted at Clubs, among select and clever society, the manners, conversation, and accomplishments which ensure success with the more delicate half of the human race. I must confess that these arguments have not at all convinced English ladies, who persist in declaring open war against these institutions. It is their opinion that Clubs produce in married men a forgetfulness of domestic duties, and in bachelors irrevocable habits of celibacy. The least irritated among these ladies avenge themselves on these institutions, by comparing their husbands to Hercules, who could not do without his Club. Without constituting myself a judge between the two parties, I readily acknowledge that Clubs are best suited for men free from any tie, or whose absence from home is not regretted. The proof that the complaint of the moralist has some foundation will be found in the fact that some fifteen years ago,

there was a discussion in the papers about throwing open the Whittington Club, which was then being started in the City, to married men and their wives; but this measure, unluckily, presents other inconveniences, and meets, in English manners, with a resistance which could not be easily disarmed. The antagonism between Club life and family life is perhaps less to be found among the English than any other nation, owing to the respect they profess for their home—that Palladium of the national institutions. I am bound to say, however, that in addition to the Clubman, properly so called, the new system has created a still more exaggerated type, in the man who belongs to several Clubs. Some Englishmen believe, in fact, that they can measure their importance in society by the number of ballots from which they emerge victoriously, and the different Clubs of which they are members. Here before all commences the abuse: and being a member of several Clubs has produced a generation of idle, useless men, wandering shadows, who go from one West-end Club to the other, with the brand of *ennui* on their foreheads,

Another accusation which could hardly be expected has been raised against the Clubs; it is said that these institutions produce even among men egotism and isolation. The rule of the new Clubs, which allows a man to dine alone, and indulge in his own thoughts, is said to break rather

than strengthen the social tie. The partisans of the modern institutions, however, will not admit that this reproach is well founded, and according to them, there is in every Club at least one man of an amiable and attractive disposition, who thus becomes, as the English say, the sun of a system of satellites. People still remember at the Athenæum Theodore Hook, who was the martyr of his good-humour and popularity. So soon as he showed himself at the Club, all assembled around him to enjoy his jokes and witticisms. When this celebrated humorist disappeared from the favourite table he occupied near the door in what was called Temperance Corner, the number of dinners served up at the Club fell off nearly three hundred in the year. I could mention many other instances of sympathies founded not so much on the charms of the mind, as on qualities of the heart. An Englishman who conversed with me on the solid friendships he had seen formed in his Club, added, "You know Tom Moore's beautiful comparison; the moon is one of the smallest and most insignificant of the heavenly bodies, and yet it is the one that gives us most light during the night, as it is the nearest to the earth. Well! men are like planets; the greatest are not those that give us the best light and divert us the most, but those who affect us most nearly and to whom we feel attracted. On this account I applaud the institution of Clubs, which brings members together in

daily intercourse, renders them to some extent necessary to each other, and attaches them by that mutual attraction which the Irish poet calls the smile of life. I allow, however, that the cordiality which characterised the good old Clubs of the last century is no longer to be met with in the modern Club Houses, and in an atmosphere of luxury. What is to be done? Times change, and institutions, as Macaulay says, undergo the form and pressure of the times. Our clubs are the offspring of a cold, calculating age, passionately attached to the useful: hence you must not expect to find in these permanent, sumptuous, and, to some extent, mechanical societies, the frank gaiety that prevailed in the old Clubs, where the gathering did not extend beyond a few friends, who met once or twice a month at the same tavern, in the same room, and most frequently at the same table. In order to maintain among us a spark of that spirit of conviviality which our fathers cultivated, a few members of the Club invite each other to dinner from time to time. We write down our names beforehand, and appoint a day; and when the day arrives, we form in a special room a semi-private society,—a sort of Club within the Club. These dinners—which we call in Club parlance house-dinners, and during which we assemble round the fraternal mahogany, instead of sitting at the old and solitary marble tables—constitute, in my eyes, a species of connecting link between the

present system and the associations of past times."

The economic system of the Clubs has superseded the old fraternities that flourished in the days of Goldsmith and Johnson, but it has not entirely destroyed them. Certain groups of individuals, who do not feel themselves rich enough or numerous enough to build a house after their own notions or taste, still content themselves with assembling in taverns. About forty years ago, a few unknown young men, who were rich, however, in the future—which was their sole wealth—used to meet near Covent Garden, at a humble inn called the Wrekin, to read and talk together. Shakspere was their idol, and his mind the connecting link of the small community. About 1824, a young light-haired Englishman, with the air of a school-boy, was introduced to the assembly—it was Douglas Jerrold. The Club took the name of the Mulberries, and a book in which each member was to write his inspirations, was christened the "Mulberry Leaves." Among the list of members figure the names of William Godwin; Kenny Meadows, who was at a later date to illustrate Shakspere; William Elton, the actor; and Edward Chatfield, the artist. This Club was at a later date merged into another, called the Shakspere, of which Charles Dickens, Talfourd, Maclise, and Macready were members. Among the more modern literary associations which resisted this

invading system of the Clubs, I will mention the Museum Club, the Hooks and Eyes, and, lastly, Our Club, of which Douglas Jerrold was the soul, the life, and the sun. The great humorist did not like the pomps of the modern establishments in Pall Mall, or servants in livery; in a good tavern, with sincere friends, he felt more at ease, more at home, and better inspired.* There he corruscated each time that he was touched, like the sea on a dark night. Most of his bitter jests and well-known sallies sparkled in these obscure taverns. The modern Goodfellows have to some extent retained the mania of their ancestors for anniversary dinners; and Douglas Jerrold, weary of such feeds, declared, that if an earthquake were to swallow up England to-morrow, the English would contrive to assemble and dine together somewhere in the ruins, if only to celebrate the event.

I have been told of a Club that existed in 1837, and may perchance still exist: it is the Unsuccessful Club, or the Club of dramatic authors who have failed.† No one had the honour of being

* Just prior to his death, Jerrold overcame his repugnance, and was elected a member of the Reform. At the suggestion of another literary member, the committee unanimously resolved, under the circumstances, on returning the entrance money and subscription to his family.

† Judging from the universal kindness of the age, which allows pieces to be withdrawn instead of considerably ——ing them, after the fashion of our ancestors, I cannot reconcile M. Esquiros's suggestion that this club is still in existence.

admitted to this Club save on the condition of having experienced a defeat on the stage. The greater that defeat had been the better were the chances of admission; if the piece was withdrawn from the bills on the second night, the author's admission was balloted; but if his tragedy or farce had been most heartily hissed, he was elected unanimously, and might order, at the expense of the Club, any dinner he pleased. The perpetual president wore a silver whistle in his button-hole, as the arms of the Club, and he boasted that during the seven years of his dramatic career the most lasting work he produced was a melodrama that sent the whole audience to sleep. He proudly counted his defeats as a soldier does his wounds, and hoped that with time he would put the pit in such a furious passion as to make them break the seats. The other dramatic Clubs are composed of amateurs, who perform now and then; and I must allow that they are more desirous of applause than hisses. One of these Clubs, known by the formidable cognomen of the Savages,* gave, a little while ago, a burlesque performance at the Lyceum, at which the Queen was present, and the house crowded. The names of the Savage men were those of gentlemen holding a certain position in

* Not so formidable, M. Esquiros, but thus called after Richard Savage, from a strange adherence to the exploded notion that authors are ill-used men, and unjustly exposed to the assaults of income-tax collectors.

society, and the play-bill announced the *School for Scandal* and the *Forty Thieves*, a burlesque taken from the "Arabian Nights." * The most meritorious thing was the object of the performance, which was to collect a sum of money to assist the widows and orphans left by two popular authors who had prematurely died. The receipts amounted to about 800*l.* "Charity covereth a multitude of sins," and those of the Savage Club, if there were any, resulted from a stage inexperience which was readily forgiven in amateurs. The so justly esteemed names of Charles Dickens and Albert Smith are also familiar as household words in these more or less dramatic Clubs.†

Young men of good family, who have received a liberal education, like to join debating Clubs. These institutions, which are as old as English liberty, undertake to train debutants in the art of speaking. A few years prior to the successful passing of the Reform Bill, there was at Cambridge a debating Club, called the Union, and the leaders of the Opposition and of the Government

* Mr. Timbs should mention in the next edition of "Things not generally known" that the parts of the Forty Thieves were offered in the most generous manner to the London publishers, who, however, declined them, with charming unanimity.

† When writing this sentence, M. Esquiros was probably unaware that Mr. Dickens is one of the finest actors ever seen on any stage; and this is only a further confirmation of the fact, which actors like to deny, that a high position on the boards can only be attained by the gentleman and the scholar.

carefully watched this school of oratory. If one of the members distinguished himself by his eloquence, he was noticed, and had the chance of being sent to Parliament at a later date. I do not doubt but that these debating Clubs contribute to develop the gift of facile elocution among the English, and hence I feel less surprise at finding them all more or less orators. Still these trials of the mind have been charged with propagating sundry abuses ; for as the programme is arranged beforehand, the speakers strive more to support any one side of a question than to discover the truth, and produce the illuming flash that emanates from the mental blades crossed in controversy. In the latter case, the debating Clubs, it is said, run the risk of weakening the conscience while strengthening the use of language. These societies often keep entirely aloof from politics, and discuss questions of law, morality, or literature. The following fact will furnish an idea of the nature of the debates, and the mental character best adapted to succeed at such meetings. " Does the sense of smell furnish man with more pleasure than that of taste ? " was one evening the subject for discussion proposed in a London debating Club. Skelton, a man renowned in this sort of dialectic fencing, was to speak last, and everybody was eager to hear him. When all the speakers had said their say for or against, he rang the bell, and asked the waiter to bring him a

glass of hot whisky punch, which he swallowed with considerable gusto. Then, turning to those gentlemen who had spoken in favour of smell, and holding the empty glass out to one of them, he exclaimed, in a voice of thunder, "Smell it, sir!" This *argumentum ad hominem* brought the entire audience over to Skelton's side, and settled the question. A thoroughly British saying of Douglas Jerrold's also met with prodigious success at a debating Club, called the Eclectic, and chiefly composed of lawyers. After an anniversary dinner, at which the principal joint was a saddle of mutton, Douglas, who was in the chair, rose and said, "Gentlemen, I hope that the noble saddle we have just eaten will become a woolsack for some of you."

Some London Clubs have a speciality for publishing books about various subjects they like. Among these not one is more original or daring than the Alpine Club, or, as others term it, the Climbing Club. The members of this association have as their motto "Excelsior," or who will mount the highest. Their pride is to bring back from the summit of gigantic mountains specimens of rocks which no other traveller has procured before them, and there is not one among them who has not risked his neck a hundred times. Their life is spent among peaks, gaping abysses, and dangerous passes, and their ascents have terrified the very Alpine guides and chamois hunters. They are

at home on the summits of the loftiest mountains, for they are so thoroughly acquainted with the plateaux, needles, crevasses, and all the diversities of these savage and trembling crests, on which the eagle dare hardly rest. Under their feet masses of rock, or mountains of snow and ice have frequently slipped down into the valley; but they laugh at them, and it would cost but little persuasion to get them to ride astride an avalanche. Not only do they despise danger, but they feel a contempt for those who fear it, and they regard us denizens of valleys and low lands as people who have no notion of poetry. Calm amid the lovely horrors of nature, they gaily take their frugal repast of bread and dry cheese, not caring for the neighbouring rocks that dash down with a thundering noise, or the avalanches that become unloosened amid a cloud of snow. "Your poets," one of them said to me, "sing on every possible occasion the charms of moonlight, but do they know them? In order to form an idea of the beauty and magnificence of night, a man must have bivouacked on the summit of the Alps. There, in a sky which not a cloud obscures, you can see the moon shining calmly and imposingly amid a galaxy of dazzling and clear stars in a jet black sky. To your right and left the stern glaciers rise in their dead pallor with a spectral air. If men had once enjoyed the free pure air of these mountainous solitudes, they would not like to

inhale any other. What a delight it is to set your footprint on these virgin snows, that seem to grow whiter and more chaste the nearer they get to Heaven! With what pity did I gaze through my telescope at the Lilliputian houses in the valley and the creeping life of their inhabitants! Climbing the scarped crests of some mountains is not an amusement unattended by danger, but courage grows with the enthusiasm amid these sublime scenes, and the soul elevates itself by all the height of the difficulties overcome."

One of the chief climbers is a bold seeker of adventures and an interesting narrator, who has often looked Death in the face, but who annually repeats his excursions amid the glaciers and Alpine solitudes. When I was introduced to him, his great desire was to go and fetch the relics of his fleece,—I mean to say, his sheep-skin coat,—which he had left behind the previous year while escalading the peaks or sliding down the slopes of the glaciers. I really doubt whether it would be possible to find elsewhere than in eccentric England a body of men so determined, so skilful, and so ambitious of danger, coolly prepared to face the material obstacles which the members of the Alpine Club surmount with a species of pride and fanatic joy.

Under the name of Clubs, so familiar to English ears, there also exist in London night societies, assembling at public-houses. These are places of amusement where poetry is declaimed or music is

played. Among these low-class Clubs there are some to which only men are admitted: these are the free-and-easies; but there are others to which husband and wife have access, and they are in that case known by the name of cock-and-hen Clubs. In this family is the Storytellers' Club, which is held every Monday evening at the Bedford Head Tavern, where late hours are spent in telling stories, and even small romances. Such an exercise of the tongue is beginning to become a profession; and I was present at this tavern on the first appearance of a professional lady, who ascended the platform, and told in succession two stories—the first sad, the other gay—just as in theatres a farce is played after the tragedy. This most elastic name of Club is also extended to other institutions, and in the districts inhabited by working-men, societies are often formed, in which each member deposits a small sum weekly, and in return receives after a certain period some articles of clothing. In this way there are shoe, clothing, and hat clubs; but, as the majority of these institutions are held at publics, it too often happens that the savings which such a system might produce disappear in drink and tobacco-smoke.

We see to what a depth the principle of association has taken root in the soil of Great Britain, and we have now to inquire whether the new system of Club Houses is really a progression

beyond that of the old Clubs. Economically regarded, the question cannot be dubious: for these modern establishments have developed, at least for a certain class, the facilities of material life on a grand scale. I may add, that what they have lost in freedom and frank gaiety, they have re-acquired in elegance, polite manners, and decorum. It is not the joyous, noisy liberty of the old Clubs that I regret so much as the direction of the thoughts, and the unity of design and purpose which, in some instances, presided over the select assemblies of past times. Comfort must certainly not be left out of sight, but in these palaces, where the material organisation has perhaps too generally effaced the moral purpose, I am grieved no longer to find that community of ideas so well kept up, which brought the good fellows of the last century together. The modern Clubs are sumptuous, cheap hotels, but are no longer, as in the days of Addison, Goldsmith, and Sheridan, schools of taste, wit, and eloquence. Is there any way of making the two principles agree, and, while retaining the economical principle of the new institutions, which is excellent, would it not be possible to give them a higher social mission? I hope so; and it is on this path of amelioration that the English Club system ought to advance. Merely saying that the Clubs, such as they are, respond to the wants and character of the nineteenth century, is no solution

of the question, for, however great the conquests and marvels of an age might be, I should pity the century which sacrificed the interests of the mind to an unbridled research after usefulness.

CHAPTER IV.

LONDON THEATRES—THE BELLE SAUVAGE—LEGITIMATE DRAMA—DRURY LANE—THE KEANS—THE PRINCESS'S—SHAKSPERIAN REVIVALS—HAMLET—COVENT GARDEN THEATRE—THE KEMBLES—THE HAYMARKET—BUCKSTONE—MISS AMY SEDGWICK—SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER.

THE English stage was one of the first in Europe to draw from the sources of the national character, and tear from the nature of the race, some of those powerful personifications that traverse ages. The cause of this superiority appears to me easy to discover. The Englishman is not a metaphysician; he has but slight taste for contemplative life, and he displays a species of haughty disdain for utopias and abstractions. Living at once in the world of facts and the world of ideas, he never separates the two forces, thinking and acting. An imperious feeling of self, which toward the close of the sixteenth century was evolved from the struggle with external nature, with mystical dogmas, and motionless institutions, had marked in English society the practical limit of rights and duties. There was a people in England at a time when, from an artistic point of view, there was

only a Court in France. In the eyes of the dramatic authors of Elizabeth's reign, every social condition was worthy of interest, every character had a value, every individual was a power in his way; hence emanated a theatre which embraced the varied forms and contrasts of human life. The struggles of the religious reformation had, moreover, imprinted on the mind that vigorous feeling of moral liberty without which nothing great is founded, either in the arts or in the political order.

I will not dwell on the origin or history of the British stage. Everybody knows that the first theatres in Great Britain were the yards of inns. Passing one day down Ludgate Hill, I noticed a French inscription, *La Belle Sauvage.* It was formerly the name of a famous inn, which had for its sign a savage standing by the side of a bell. The sense of the old painting greatly occupied the antiquarians of the last century. If we may believe Addison, the inn owed its name to an old French romance, which was translated into English. The heroine of this romance was a lovely woman who had lived in a desert, and whom the English called by corruption the bell savage. However this may be, Belle Sauvage Yard formerly served as a theatre for dramatic representations, and Tarlton, the most celebrated actor of his time, performed there. The inn no longer exists: its site is now occupied by a lane,

with houses on either side; but some of these ancient inns may be found in various parts of England. The most curious to my knowledge is the Four Swans in Shoreditch. By the arrangement of the yard, forming pit and stage, by the order of the galleries running round two sides of the house, by the form of certain rooms looking out on the basement and resembling *baignoires*, we can form an idea of what the open-air representations were in the inn yards, which were the cradles and prototypes of our theatres.

Who does not know, also, that these fortuitous theatres were succeeded by others more or less permanent, of an hexagonal shape, built of wood, partly exposed to the climate and partly covered with a roof of mud or reeds? The performances took place in open day, and were announced by a flag being hoisted on the roof of the rustic edifice, which resembled at a distance a barn or a fortress of savages. These hovels were all destroyed in less than a century by fire or by the fury of the Puritans, who wished to proscribe the liberty of amusement in England. From their ashes or ruins sprang, at a later date, regular theatres built of brick, such as the playhouse in Portugal Row, and Gibbon's Tennis Court in Vere Street. These have also disappeared for a very long time. A more lively interest attaches, I believe, to the modern London theatres, especially as forming a portion of our study of English life

and manners. Although our neighbours have shone on the stage in more than one style, I will only dwell here on the drama of the national school. What the English drama was some years back under the system of privilege, what it became under the system of liberty, and the causes which have deteriorated one of the glories of British literature in the country of Shakspere, are questions sufficiently interesting for us to turn our attention to them in the first instance.

Up to 1832, three great theatres alone had the privilege of performing what the English call legitimate drama: they were Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and the Haymarket.

The gloomy, massive, externally most unornate building, which now bears the name of Drury Lane Theatre, was built in 1812; but it succeeded other buildings of the same nature which were in turn built, pulled down, and rebuilt nearly on the same site. In the time of Shakspere there existed in Drury Lane an old cockpit, which was converted into a playhouse under the name of the Phœnix. During the religious wars the Phœnix underwent the fate of the other theatres; destroyed by a band of Puritans in 1617, rebuilt, closed again in 1648 by the same sect of fanatics, who were then masters of England, it allowed the storm to pass. The Restoration was an era of regeneration for the theatres. A certain Thomas Killigrew obtained from Charles II. the privilege of amusing the public

with dramas, dancing, and music. His company, after wandering about for some time, was at length fixed on the site of the old Cockpit, which was then raised to the dignity of the King's Theatre. Dissatisfied with the old house, Killigrew soon had a new one built, and opened it in 1663. This may be regarded as the origin of the present Drury Lane Theatre.

From this moment we may, in fact, follow without cessation the history of this theatre, which, under various fortunes, embraces several grand periods of the dramatic art in England. There the school of the Restoration burst into life with Dryden, Lee, and Otway at the head of tragedy; Wycherly, Congreve, Farquhar, and Vanbrugh at the head of comedy. There was born, under Richard Steele, who was for a time manager of Drury Lane, sentimental comedy—a false style, which lived but a short time, and but little deserved to live. There, lastly, reigned Sheridan, who as author raised the fortunes of Drury Lane, and at the same time destroyed them by his bad management. It must be remarked that in England, as well as in France, the best literary men have made wretched theatrical managers. Old Drury, as the English call it, has seen many other dramatic festivals. Under the management of Mr. Bunn, who recently died, the actors of the theatre had the honour of repeating, in 1834, the verses of Byron's "Sardanapalus" and "Manfred," which, by the

poet's avowal, were not written for acting, but successfully faced the dangers of representation, after a few excisions and some slight remodelling.* Drury Lane, I regret to say, has not always sustained itself at this literary elevation. As the English theatres receive nothing from the State, the managers too frequently make miserable concessions to the coarsest tastes of the public. When great writers and good actors fail them, they have recourse without a blush to any sort of expedient that will fill up the deficit in the treasury.

It is not merely the literary history of Drury Lane that is retraced before my eyes when I am awaiting, on the benches of that theatre, the rising of the curtain. The various generations of actors and actresses that have succeeded each other, pass like shadows over this silent stage, which is hidden by a large green cloth, motionless and impenetrable as the veil of time. Here is pretty Nell Gwynne, with the extravagant hat under which she recited a prologue of Dryden's, and who so powerfully

* The principal attraction of "Sardanapalus" is, from a theatrical point of view, the character of Myrrha, the young Greek slave. This part was created at Drury Lane by Miss Ellen Tree (now Mrs. C. Kean). It is said that she marvellously expressed the delicate shades of the heroine dreamed of by Byron—the pride of an Ionian heart which reproaches itself with loving a barbarian, and seeks to ennoble him. In her was found the angel of the harem, in whom the love of liberty and disdain of death are tempered by the consciousness of her degrading condition and her weakness. I saw "Sardanapalus" in 1857 performed at the Princess's, when the same part was filled with considerable grace and talent by Miss Murray.

attracted the attention of Charles II. When a young girl, she had carried a basket of fish about London streets, run from tavern to tavern to amuse topers with songs, and sold oranges in the theatres: what a training for a king's mistress! Peace to her soul, in spite of the follies and weaknesses of which history accuses her, for she had one good thought in her life. I see Mrs. Oldfield pass, celebrated for her beauty, graces, and her voice like a silver bell, which caused the success of Steele's pieces. Next pass Wilkes, the handsomest gentleman of his time; and Cibber, the famous coxcomb, with that memorable wig he was in love with, which was solemnly brought on the stage in a sedan-chair, and which he proudly adjusted in the presence of the audience. Is not that Garrick, the prodigy of the English stage, who is now advancing with a double face—laughter and tears, tragedy and comedy? And when the reign of Garrick is drawing to a close, who comes to pick up the ornaments of the fallen crown? Parsons, Dodd, Quick, the Palmers, Miss Pope, who, after playing in tragedy, at times endowed comedy with an emotion which gained her all the votes; Miss Abingdon, the greatest satirist of her own sex; Miss Farren, who, being tall and weak, possessed the graces of delicacy. But here the shadows fade away, and are about to make room for recollections that still live in the minds of some contemporaries.

The beginning of our century was a memorable

epoch for tragedy, comedy, and Old Drury. I need only recal the names of Miss O'Neill, Edmund Kean, Charles Young, Mathews, and Macready. The latter still lives, but retired from the stage some years ago. A short period of glory was succeeded by a time of decadence and gloomy sterility. Some accuse the indifference of the public, others the exaggerated pretensions of the actors, of having occasioned the decline of the British drama. However this may be, Drury Lane had fallen so low as a commercial enterprise, that no one was willing longer to run the risks of management. At length, Mr. James Anderson had the courage to undertake it; but, in spite of honourable efforts, he could not restore dramatic life to the theatre; and at the present day Drury Lane is in the hands of Mr. E. T. Smith. The opera, at least during one portion of the theatrical season, now fills the solitude of this vast house, where the genius of Shakspeare, interpreted by great actors, was formerly sufficient to attract crowds.

A dramatic event, however, some two months back, recalled the attention of the public to Drury Lane;* it was the reappearance of Mr. Charles Kean and his wife in London. Charles Kean has the dangerous honour of evoking and taking with him on the boards the crushing memory of his father. People,

* Though this was written in 1861, as Mr. Kean has just been performing at Drury Lane again, the passage can stand without alteration.

on seeing him, still remember that night of March 25, 1833, when he, performing Iago, while Edmund Kean filled the part of Othello, received on the stage, as it were, the last sigh of that great tragedian, who was worn out by dissipation and the struggles of a stormy life. The comparison with Edmund Kean is overwhelming for any living actor; hence we must put aside with all our might a parallel which seems to attach itself of preference to the actor who bears his name. Charles Kean was not born an actor, he became so by the *fiat lux* of perseverance. In order to appreciate his value thoroughly, we must specially trace him back to his management of the Princess's from 1850 to 1859.

This management has formed an epoch in the history of the British drama. The object Charles Kean proposed to himself, in his Shakspearian revivals, was to resuscitate Shakspeare's plays, while illustrating them with all the splendour of the *mise en scène*, the exactitude of costume, and the marvellous power of the decorations. He had been preceded in this path by Macready, the best English tragedian since John Kemble and Edmund Kean. We may even say that the theatrical reform had begun in the time of Garrick, though not through the care of that great actor, who performed Hamlet in a wig and a court coat of the fashion of his time. Macklin attempted, under Garrick's own eyes, to draw nearer to historic truth. This reform, nevertheless, advanced very

slowly; and it was only in Macready's day, that is, in the last thirty years, that it assumed any serious importance. Macready was not, like Garrick and like Edmund Kean, an actor born: he lacked that simple grandeur and natural majesty which at once appropriates the domain of tragedy; but he possessed tact, marvellous skill, and great intelligence.* When manager of Drury Lane, which theatre he left in 1840, he attempted, and even on a greater scale than Charles Kean, to raise the brilliancy of the representation to the level of Shakspeare's plays. If, then, the attempt were not new, Charles Kean had at least the courage to carry it further than any one of his predecessors, by learned archæological researches, by profound learning, and a possibly exaggerated faith in the value of picturesque effect.

He was assisted in his work of revival by two artists, Messrs. Grieve and Telbin, who employed their pencils for him. The architecture, dresses, furniture, plan of the battles, weapons, all were appropriate to the time and place in which the action of the play was developed. Praises are certainly due to the ex-manager of the Princess's

* Edmund Kean and Macready appeared together at Drury Lane in Othello. Kean professed a sovereign contempt for the talent of his fellow actor. But that may be easily understood; for one was the child of nature, the other was formed by art. The rumour spreads from time to time that Mr. Macready is about to reappear on the stage; but he is now seventy years of age.

for the respect he evinced for his art and for historic truth. I looked with profound interest upon these marvellous revivals: nothing was ever seen or perhaps will be seen again to equal them. This severe exactness, this costly getting up, and these dazzling decorations have, however, given rise to more than one objection: it has been asked whether Mr. Kean, thinking that Shakspeare, in his rude and noble simplicity, no longer suited the taste of the day, did not wish to court the fashionable world and attract an audience of curious persons instead of one of connoisseurs? Might not this constant anxiety about the local colouring injure to some extent the study of human feelings and the depicture of character, which ought to hold the first place in the minds of the poet and the actor? Had not Mr. Kean, deceived by a false enthusiasm for the dignity of the drama, laid golden fetters on Shakspeare's wings? had he not made pieces that were eminently literary a mere spectacle? From the serious art-point of view, these questions are grave, and I do not think that Mr. Kean has entirely solved them in his own favour.

At the present day Mr. Charles Kean presents himself to us on the boards of Drury Lane theatre without any of those accessories with which he was accused of concealing the insufficiency of the actor at the Princess's. His success has, for all that, been very great. One half of that success is

justly due to Mrs. Charles Kean, who is a perfect and unrivalled tragedian. These two artistes displayed themselves in turn in tragedy and comedy. I will not dwell on the characters they performed with more or less success in second-rate works. I would sooner go back at once to the master of the English stage, to that mighty stream of genius and dramatic passions, from which all the great actors and actresses from age to age have drawn their most vivid personifications. British civilisation is based on two books, the Bible and Shakspeare. I knew an English gentleman who thanked Heaven for letting him be born an Englishman for three reasons: the first was because he lived in freedom; the second, that when travelling he met countrymen all over the world; and the third, that he could read and hear Shakspeare's plays in the language in which they were written. I confess that it is ever a mental festival to me when I see one of the plays of the great English poet interpreted by English actors. Although Shakspeare travelled greatly through ages, and appropriated with rare power the elements of the different civilisations that flourished on the surface of the globe, he always retains a strong imprint of the British genius. I was especially struck with this when I saw Charles Kean in the character of Hamlet.

When I was in France, I believed that I knew the play from having seen it performed on the stage; not after Ducis, but after a translation said

to be literal. At London my illusion was dissipated with the rising of the curtain. We know nothing of Shakspeare, at least of the acted Shakspeare. The habits of our stage are opposed to those sudden changes which permit the action of the drama to be followed from one place to the other without breaking the moral unity. With the exception of a few elisions, which are perhaps necessary in a poem of four thousand and fifty-eight lines, the performance here differs in no respect from the written play. Hamlet, it is true, has not always been played with this fidelity. Garrick suppressed the voyage to England, the funeral of Ophelia, Hamlet's philosophic discourse, and the rude jests of the grave-diggers. The old actors had taken many other liberties; but the ever-increasing respect of the English for their great dramatic poet, would not tolerate at the present day such changes or such omissions. Is it merely in the form that the drama, on the British stage, diverges from our French ideas? Certainly not; the character of Hamlet, with his biting sallies, his eccentricities, his sudden and stern outbursts, his humour, the dull intonations of his repressed vengeance, cannot be rendered or understood by any but an English actor. Besides, I have said nothing of Shakspeare's magnificent diction, which adds such strength and relief to the poet's ideas.

The life of Hamlet is, so to speak, formed on the English stage by a succession of great actors.

Burbage, who lived in the time of Shakspeare, handed down the part to Taylor, Taylor to Hart, Hart to Betterton, and so on down to Charles Kean, who has made it the peculiar object of his study. While following tradition, each of them naturally introduced new effects; thus John Kemble was the first who thought of kneeling to the ghost of Hamlet's father. In the scene with Polonius, at the moment when the latter asks him, "What are you reading, my lord?" and when Hamlet answers "Slander," Kemble, to give greater force to his semblance of madness, and to express the violent state of his mind, tore the page from the book. Nor have people forgotten in England his absorbed air, his forehead wrinkled and bowed by the weight of an indomitable fatality, or the tragic expression of his eyebrows at the moment when he sought to penetrate the frightful mystery of his father's death. In the scene where Hamlet discovers that the corpse which is being buried is that of Ophelia, he had not, however, it is said, the pathos of Henderson, who in that scene seemed moved to the depths of his soul.

The other characters of the play have also been successively incarnated in a few famous artists. Not one of those who have hitherto represented the ghost has equalled Booth, if we may believe the annals of the stage. His slow, solemn, sepulchral voice, his silent walk, his face belonging to

another world, and his whole action struck the audience with a feeling of giddiness and terror. Ophelia has also passed through various transformations, but it remains as it were sculptured in the memory of Mrs. Siddons. Her great beanty, the innocent grace with which she received the advice of her brother Laertes, the change in her features, the terror and the manner in which she related to Polonius the apparition of Hamlet, pale and in disorder, in her room, defy, so the English declare, any comparison with living actresses. In the mad scene, however, another celebrated actress, Mrs. Mountford, who was a contemporary of Cibber, and on whom Gay wrote his ballad of "Black-eyed Susan," seems to have attained the sublimity of truth. Love had deprived her of reason, and she was confined in a madhouse, when, one day, during a lucid interval, she asked what was the piece to be performed that evening at the theatre. The answer she received was to the effect that it was Hamlet. She remembered that she had always been partial to the character of Ophelia, and with the cunning that frequently characterises the insane, she escaped toward evening from the asylum, went to the theatre, and, concealed in the side scenes, awaited the moment when Ophelia was to appear in a state of madness. She glided on to the stage at the moment when the actress who had played the first portion of the part was about to make her entrance. Imagine the

surprise of the audience at the sight of another face, which had the eyes, expression, voice, and gestures of the ideal girl dreamed of by Shakspeare! It was no longer an actress, but Ophelia herself; it was madness, but intelligent madness, at once graceful and terrible. Nature had made a supreme effort. "Now," the actress exclaimed, on leaving the theatre, "all is over." Mrs. Mountford died a few days later.

In their enthusiasm for Shakspeare the English have investigated what were the age, height, and temperament of Hamlet. There is also another phase of this character, which, though only since a very recent period, has attracted the attention of men of letters and critics. I mean the weakness, impotence, and dreamy, sentimental, and almost hysterical humour of Hamlet, which form at least a striking contrast with the ambition of the young prince, and the energy and grandeur of his designs. It has even been asked whether, from this point of view, the character could not be advantageously assumed by a woman. An English actress who is still living, Miss Marriott, attempted the experiment a few years ago, at Glasgow theatre, with marked success. We must not seek this delicate and to some extent feminine touch in Charles Kean's acting. He performs the part according to the traditions of the English stage, which has hitherto troubled itself but slightly about considerations that came in great

measure from Germany. Nor is Charles Kean, from the theatrical point of view, his father's son; he is the child of study, reflection, and judgment. If he has neither the power nor majesty of John Kemble, the passion of Edmund Kean, nor the intelligence of Macready, he possesses, at any rate, a fine talent, acquired by noble efforts, and no living actor can be preferred to him in the part of Hamlet. Although the piece was mounted with but little care at Drury Lane, I confess that it produced in me one of those powerful emotions of which no other but the English stage is capable.*

The short passage of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean restored temporary life to the drama on the boards of Drury Lane; but can this event be regarded as a sign of revival, and can any favourable conclusion as to the future be drawn from it? I fear it is not so. Comedy and farce, till the opera begins, are going to take possession again of the same theatre where Shakspeare reigned nearly the whole year through over a fervent people of adorers. If I constantly name Shakspeare, it is because he alone, of the dramatic authors of the great Elizabethan era, has still the power to drag the people from time to time out of their indifference. The others, in spite of the eminent qualities the English recog-

* In justice to Mr. E. T. Smith I am bound to add that a very great change for the better, as regards scenic effects, has been made this year.

nise in them, have only reappeared at lengthened intervals on the stage, like meteors.

Three gentlemen made, some years ago, generous efforts to restore dramatic literature; I allude to Douglas Jerrold, Bulwer, and Sheridan Knowles. The first is dead, the two others are still alive, but no longer work for the stage. Sheridan Knowles, whose character is honoured, and talent admired by everybody, is now a preacher. This alliance of theatrical faculties and mystic ideas would perhaps be surprising in France, but is not at all so in England, where the serious drama is regarded as the least profane of mental occupations. These three writers left behind them on the stage pieces which at once became popular: Douglas Jerrold, "Black-eyed Susan;" Bulwer, the "Lady of Lyons," and "Money;" Sheridan Knowles, the "Hunchback," "William Tell," the "Rose of Castille," the "Love Chase," and several others. Most of these dramas, which still have a right of citizenship on the stage, serve from time to time to throw a lustre on the *début* of a new actor or actress; but they have lost the freshness of novelty, and nothing has yet been produced to take their place.

If we pass, however, from Drury Lane to Covent Garden, we shall find ancient and modern drama even worse neglected.

The origin of Covent Garden Theatre goes back to Davenant, who extorted from Charles II. the right of blending the drama with music simul-

taneously with Killigrew. This theatre, built by Rich, the celebrated harlequin, was opened to the public in 1733, and the actors at first took the name of the Duke's servants. They were the same as had previously acted at another theatre in Portugal Row, with William Davenant at their head. Rich, as manager, was much what is called a man of business in our day; and he is accused of having inoculated the British public with a taste for spectacle. Although an uneducated man, he made a lucky hit by the representation of the "Beggar's Opera." This piece had an extraordinary run in consequence of it containing allusions directed against the Court. If we may believe the authority of Gibbon, the "Beggar's Opera" had also a social influence; for, according to him, this piece served to reform the manners of the highwaymen by rendering them less ferocious and more polite—in a word, more gentlemanly: to which some one replied that Gay, the author of the piece, "was the Orpheus of robbers." Otway also said, in allusion to the monetary success, that this opera rendered "Gay rich and Rich gay." From the outset, the two neighbouring theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, have always stood in a state of rivalry. Most of the great actors we have mentioned played in turn on both stages; but there are some whose memory seems more especially connected with Covent Garden. Such were Barry, the most brilliant of Alexanders; Quin, so well

known for his epigrams; and Macklin, who was especially admired in the part of Shylock. These actors left Garrick, who at that time continued to be the monarch of Drury Lane, through jealousy. The two companies offered each other magnificent challenges, frequently playing the same Shakspearian play for entire months, and waiting to see which theatre the crowd would cease visiting before proclaiming victory or defeat.

At Covent Garden especially, the great Kemble family flourished, during times approaching more nearly to our age. The dramatic genius appeared to be incarnated in this family, which gave to the English stage John and Charles Kemble, and their sister Sarah, better known by the name of Mrs. Siddons. The elder and more remarkable of the two brothers, John Philip Kemble, was born at Prescot, in Lancashire, in 1757. His father was manager of a company, with whom John made his first appearance at the age of ten. He belonged, it is said, to the old school of declamation; but his sister, Mrs. Siddons, who was gifted with a true genius, was more imbued than he was with a feeling for nature. Her tragic beauty surpassed everything that had been seen on an English stage; when she appeared, her black hair and eyebrows, her eagle glance and commanding gesture, gave her an air of grandeur and heroic majesty. Not satisfied with adorning the stage with the brilliancy of her talent, she

elevated the theatrical profession by her dignified manners. She was born at Brecon, at a public-house that bears to this day the sign of the Shoulder of Mutton. A barn is also still pointed out at Stourbridge, in which it is asserted that Mrs. Siddons made her first appearance in an extraordinary representation for the benefit of the company, who were then very short of money. The officers of a regiment quartered in the town offered their services to give greater attraction to the performance. Sarah Kemble, who was then a girl of fifteen, played the part of the heroine in the piece. She ought to have fainted in her lover's arms, but, instead of appearing unwell, she burst into a loud laugh, and ran off the stage to the great confusion of the officer, who afterwards declared that he could willingly have stabbed her at the moment. At a later date Mrs. Siddons appeared at Drury Lane in the character of Isabella, and her son Henry represented a child in the same tragedy, "The Fatal Marriage;" but although Drury Lane was the cradle of her theatrical career in London, the name of this actress, like that of her brother, John Kemble, seems to belong by preference to Covent Garden.

Covent Garden Theatre has been burned down several times—it is the ordinary fate of theatres—but I will only allude to the fire of March 5, 1856. Being in London at the time, and passing by the

theatre the next day, I saw the blackened and still smoking beams; nothing but tottering walls remained of the old theatre. Fire is a beneficent enemy for theatres; for it compels them, after a few years rest, to place themselves on a level with the progress of architecture. The old poet Taylor had already made this remark with reference to the Globe, which in his day was destroyed by the flames. Owing to this circumstance, the earth roof and wooden walls of the old theatre were succeeded by a more suitable building: "An image," he adds, "of the great things that triumph through the trials of those who dare to incur the greatest dangers." The Covent Garden Theatre I saw on my arrival in London, a heavy and large construction, of a very puritan style, has, through the bitter favours of fire, been succeeded by one of the most elegant buildings I am acquainted with, and best adapted to the character of a theatre. The architect is Mr. Barry, son of the gentleman who built the new Palace of Parliament. Flaxman's bas reliefs and statues, which decorated the old theatre, were saved and adapted again with marvellous taste. To the theatre a Crystal Palace or Floral Hall is attached, which serves either as a concert hall, a flower-market, or a delicious promenade. The interior of the theatre can only be compared for grandeur and magnificence to the Scala at Milan; the enormous chandelier suspended from the ceiling, or more correctly, from a dome of pale azure; the rich-

ness of the proscenium, which would crush any other theatre of less august dimensions, but which is supported here, with relative grace and lightness, by large side columns; the decorations, the figures and supports of the boxes—is not all this sufficient to justify the maledictions of the old legitimate drama, which, since the rebuilding of the house, has not been invited to all these splendours? Covent Garden has entirely passed over to the enemy; I mean by this, music, which is regarded in England, and rightly so, as the rival that has supplanted tragedy in the good graces of the public.

A few words will be sufficient to explain this change in the tastes and manners of the English. Up to 1815, the opera occupied but a small place in London; but after the events which produced the downfal of the French Emperor, Great Britain underwent in the arts the re-action of the foreign invasion of France. French, Italian, and German singers came to establish themselves in England, at least for a part of the year, and spread in English society a love for music which, like all new loves, soon became exclusive. The English aristocracy, who more than all the other aristocracies in the world, set the fashion for public amusements, evinced a preference for singing, which was soon shared by the other classes of society. Of course, I have nothing to say against the progress of musical taste, I merely regret to see

one of the glories of the English theatre sacrificed to it.

The third patent theatre was, prior to 1832, that of the Haymarket, which was founded about the year 1720. In 1735, Henry Fielding opened the theatrical season there with the Grand Mogul's company, a burlesque, in which he played his famous part of Pasquin for forty nights running; but the theatre was obliged to close in the midst of its success, in consequence of an Act of 1736, which subjected concert and dancing rooms to certain legal restrictions. In 1744 the Haymarket was reopened under Macklin's management, from whose hands it passed in 1747 into those of Foote, who hit on the idea of inviting his audience to tea, and rendered it one of the most amusing places in London. It was to Foote that the theatre owed its privileges. This comedian being out hunting one day, when the Duke of York was in the field, had the misfortune (good fortune, if you like) to break his leg. Through the Duke's intercession, he obtained, as a species of compensation for this accident, a licence for life, which authorised him to convert the Haymarket, which up to this time had only been a music and dancing room, into a real summer theatre. At a later date this theatre became permanent. The present building, erected in 1821, which the English call with a species of paternal tenderness, the little Haymarket, has always been more renowned for comedy than the

drama; and the present manager is Mr. Buckstone.

At once author, manager, and comic actor, John Baldwin Buckstone is one of the most striking and original characters on the English stage. On seeing at the present day this comic masque, whose very silence arouses the laughter of an entire audience, it is really difficult to imagine that the same actor made his first appearance about the year 1823, in the parts of Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, and Richard III. The peculiar bias of his talent appears to have been revealed to him by an accident. The low comedian was absent one evening, and Buckstone was requested to take his part half-an-hour before the performance began. The part was that of Gabriel, the drunken servant in the "Children in the Wood." The success he obtained on this occasion opened his eyes to an entirely new side of his nature, which as yet he was not acquainted with. He had discovered his vein. Buckstone, however, did not at once give up tragedy; but, after a species of contest between his first illusions and his natural vocation, he ended by attaching himself exclusively to the comic side of human life. On this ground he need fear no rivals, for he personifies British humour and drollery, better perhaps than any living actor. His play is so speaking that I have seen Frenchmen, who did not know a word of English, perfectly understand from the actor's gestures and faces, the character

to which he gave life on the stage. He is in fact the person he represents. As dramatic author, Mr. Buckstone also holds a distinguished rank; he came out in London many years ago in a piece of his own composition, "Luke the Labourer;" and since that time, more than one hundred and fifty comedies, dramas, and farces have poured from his prolific pen. Heaven preserve all these pieces from living; but there are some among the number that bear the stamp of a fine, active, and ingenious mind. Such are the "Rough Diamond," "The Flowers of the Forest," "Second Thoughts," and "The Green Bushes," the success of which, though old, is still evergreen.

Another attraction of the Haymarket is Miss Amy Sedgwick.* I can remember the sensation produced in 1858 by this lady's appearance at the Haymarket, in Bulwer's drama the "Lady of Lyons," in which she gave new life to the character of Pauline. The rumour at once spread that a new star had risen in the dramatic horizon. She at once supplanted Miss Reynolds, who till then had been in possession of the public favour. Her success could only be compared with that of Edmund Kean, when he appeared as a phenomenon on the boards of Drury Lane. Where did she come from?

* It is hardly worth while correcting the changes that have taken place since this article was written. Of course, every body is aware that Miss Sedgwick now forms the delight of an Olympic audience.

where had she obtained her theatrical education? It was discovered that after studying in London in 1852, at an amateur theatre in Catherine Street, she went the round of the provinces, from Richmond to Bristol, from Bristol to Cardiff, and from Cardiff to Manchester. Mr. Buckstone, recognising in her a talent that was not in its proper place, a candle hidden under a bushel, at length engaged her to come and shine in London. I have seen Miss Amy Sedgwick perform at the Haymarket the part of Constance, in the "Love Chase," one of Sheridan Knowles' best pieces, and that of Esther in the "Unequal Match," written by Tom Taylor. What first struck me in this actress, was the wealth of her dramatic range: she passes gradually from soft notes, and if I may use the expression, from a chiaroscuro to the most brilliant and vigorous effects. In the "Unequal Match," for instance, a piece admirably calculated to bring out the extent of her talent, she first appears as a simple, modest, and ingenuous village girl; then, as the wife of a man of fashion, who deserts her after marrying her for love; lastly, she transforms herself, in order to win back her husband's heart, and represents a splendid coquette, the queen of fashion, the idol of a small German court, where she subjugates everybody by the unlimited power of her charms.

Personally, Miss Amy Sedgwick owes much to nature, cultivated by art. She is not a Greek

beauty, but a true English beauty, tall and well filled out, with an intelligent mouth and forehead, blue eyes, hair of a golden auburn, firmly and yet delicately pencilled eye-brows, teeth of irreproachable whiteness, and a peculiar art of conquest, which belongs at once to the personal character and to the race. Miss Amy Sedgwick first turned her attention to tragedy, and she certainly possesses some of the qualities of the serious style, calm reflection, enthusiasm, melancholy, and the gift, which is rare among English actresses, of raising herself without effort or exaggeration to the most violent transports of the dramatic feeling. Still I greatly prefer her in comedy. Instead of feebly disputing for the palm with Rachel in the part of Adrienne Lecouvreur, she would be wiser in keeping on her own ground—Shakspere's comedies for instance, in which she is capable of displaying, in addition to serious emotions, thoroughly British humour, fire and grace.* Although still young (she is not yet thirty), Miss Sedgwick respects and spares her talent, and does not perform very frequently. Married to Dr. Parkes, she divides her life between her home, the world, and

* Miss Sedgwick ought before all to be seen in Shakspere's delicious "Much ado about Nothing." Her bitter sarcasm in this play has been compared to a flowering thistle, which leaves to the wind the care of carrying away its amorous petals. In spite of her great qualities, Miss Sedgwick plays with more art than nature; and it is through this that she remains inferior to the great actresses of the last century.

the theatre. Recently she has appeared to have a liking for a species of literary amusement, which, I fancy, is entirely unknown in France: I allude to "Literary Readings." The actress interprets in these readings, and in the presence of a select audience, passages selected from the masterpieces of such writers as Shakspere, Sheridan, Tennyson, Campbell, and Dickens.

I have often regretted that the Haymarket, in its quality as a once patented theatre, did not devote one portion of the year to a revival of the old English comedies. There is doubtless more than one difficulty in the matter: in the first place, the taste of the public, and, secondly, the actors, who have lost the good and healthy traditions. The second obstacle is the more serious of the two, in my opinion, and I judge from Goldsmith's charming comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer," which I saw performed at the Haymarket, for the first appearance of Miss Fanny Sterling. Unfortunately, the play of the actors did not respond to the delicacy of Goldsmith's talent; it was heavy, overloaded, and aimed more at buffoonery than comedy. There was, however, one character which stood out from the general exaggeration with the colour of life and local truth: it was that of Tony Lumpkin, performed by Buckstone. The actor is too old for the part: but you find in him the country Squire, such as he existed a century ago, and such, I fear, as he still exists, in some rural districts of

England. This great spoiled child, who is more than twenty years of age, and does not know how to write, a haunter of taverns, a lover of horses, dogs, and cock-fights, trusting to his fortune to cover and excuse his ignorance, rough in his manners, jovial, malicious, but good-hearted withal, is, thanks to Goldsmith and Buckstone, one of the most excellent paintings of manners the English stage can offer. I have often asked myself whether a theatre which thus passed in review the comedies of the two last centuries, would not be the best source at which a foreigner could study the history of the national character.

Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and the Haymarket, have lost the greater portion of their privileges. So far back as 1830, the London minor theatres had begun to perform the drama, and in order to evade the law, which interdicted that style of literature, a few notes of the pianoforte accompanied the performances. In 1830, the proprietors of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, anxious to retain their monopoly, took out summonses against these theatres, which were dismissed by the Bow Street magistrates. Lastly, in 1832, the influence of Bulwer in the House of Commons caused a restriction to be effaced from the legislature, which was condemned by the spirit of toleration and the popular feeling. At the present day all the theatres can produce any thing they please.

Has the drama, under the regime of liberty, reconquered in the minor theatres the ground it lost, as we have shown, in the then royal abodes, where it was formerly protected against competition? That is a question which facts shall answer.

CHAPTER V.

SADLER'S WELLS—MR. PHELPS—MISS ATKINSON—ASTLEY'S—MR. TOM TAYLOR—THE NEW ADELPHI—MR. WEBSTER—THE DEAD HEART—THE COLLEEN BAWN—THE LYCEUM—MADAME CELESTE — THE ST. JAMES'S THEATRE — THE OLYMPIC AND MR. ROBSON—THE STANDARD—DRAMATIC AUTHORS—SUBVENTION TO THE THEATRES.

WE must first turn our attention to the oldest of the minor theatres, which has now become—if I may use the expression—"the home of Shakspere." It owes its name—Sadler's Wells Theatre—to a mineral spring that formerly belonged to the Monks of St. John in Clerkenwell. These waters were renowned as curing all possible maladies; people flocked to them till an order issued by Cromwell put a stop to a pilgrimage which the Protector condemned as a relic of Papal superstitions. The same spring, found again by workmen who were building a tea and coffee-house, was, it is said, worked successfully. Sadler, one of the first managers, gave his name to the establishment, which gradually assumed the character of a third rate theatre. Burlettas and pantomimes were performed there; but the staple

attractions of the place were dancing on the tight-rope and acrobatic feats. The house having been partly rebuilt, water was introduced on the stage, and nautical representations were given. These circumstances, and more still, the extraordinary talent of Joey Grimaldi, the greatest of all clowns, attracted the multitude for a time; but Grimaldi died, the nautical spectacles lost the charm of novelty, and this theatre was dragging on a poor and precarious existence in a corner of London, when the mantle of Shakspere came to regenerate it.

It was in 1844, when the cause of the legitimate drama seemed lost before the public as judges. Macready had just tried at Drury Lane the power of scenery and a talented interpretation, applied to the works of the great national poet. By this experiment he had acquired glory but lost money. The enormous expenses entailed by dramatic representations on so grand a style and in such a vast theatre, had been certainly valuable both to the art and the public, but the manager had suffered by them. Covent Garden and Drury Lane had sworn to profit by the lesson by turning to other Gods, even were it to the Golden Calf. The situation, as we see, was not at all encouraging, at least from a commercial point of view, for the admirers of Shakspere. It was, however, at this time that two gentlemen undertook at their own risk and peril to raise the character of the English

stage, which was degraded by all sorts of vulgar divertissements, and restore poetic drama. One of them, Mr. Greenwood, was an intelligent manager; the other, Mr. Phelps, was a tragedian who had proved his value by the side of Macready. Far from believing with the majority of managers of that day that Shakspere had gone out of fashion, they said to themselves that, on the contrary, nothing had as yet taken his place—that nothing would ever take it—and that the powerful beauties of the poet were sufficient, without ruinous magnificence of scenery, to regain the constant enthusiasm of the British public. Having selected the small Sadler's Wells Theatre, the partners divided their territory between them; the first took charge of the house, the second of the stage; thus letting the curtain mark the limits of their empire. The poetic drama soon emerged triumphantly from a struggle, in which it had no means of conquest beyond its own weapons and its own resources. Although other plays have been performed from time to time, the works of Shakspere have constituted for years and still constitute the life of this theatre. Sadler's Wells is a species of temple devoted to the Bard of Avon.

Sadler's Wells had at the outset great obstacles to surmount, but I will only mention one, its position. To the eyes of certain Englishmen, or rather certain inhabitants of London, nothing

exists beyond that circle of the town which they call fashionable. Now, Sadler's Wells, although raised to the rank of the great theatres, had the misfortune of being in a part of London which has nothing aristocratic about it. It is said that a very young actress had aroused hopes among the admirers of Shakspere, when she had the misfortune to meet in society a young coxcomb, who asked her at what theatre she acted, while expressing at the same time a desire to see her on the stage. On hearing the name of Sadler's Wells, he assumed the look of a man, who hears a place mentioned which is situated at the antipodes; "and how many changes of horses," he exclaimed, "shall I have to order to get there?" The actress, it is added, had the weakness to be vexed by the foolish joke, and gave up her profession. I will not assert that such a prejudice is shared to the same extent by the *élite* of London society; but I believe that Phelps' company, in spite of the name of Shakspere, and the talent of the actors, would be little known by the West-end fashionables if they had not performed during the summer season at the Princess's.

It is true that the eccentric position of this theatre on the map of London, while isolating Sadler's Wells from the attendance and good graces of the aristocracy, has given it a special public, which may be called the true public of the drama, and composed of workmen, tradesmen, and

young people who are more or less educated. This public of *habitués* and amateurs has vowed a species of worship to the master-pieces of the English stage. It is very curious to see round the galleries the dark garland of heads bent down to the stage, watching all the movements of the actors and listening with religious attention to the voice of the poet. The silence disturbed for an instant by the applause, is immediately re-established: the powerful emotions of the tragedy find in the hearts of the people loud echoes, and a species of virile fervour, which has not yet been checked by indifference and materialism. Is there any London theatre at which this alliance is more strikingly shown than at Sadler's Wells? Nowhere else, I believe, does such a magnetic current exist between the spectators and the actors. And who does not see that the soul of Shakspere is the link of that sympathy? It does not enter into my design to enquire here into the social influence of the Shaksperian drama, but if I may judge from the expressions of the faces upon the fall of the curtain, that influence must be considerable. A theatre which every night drags spectators from the obscure and coarse pre-occupations of real life, to transport them to the starry realms of poetry, and which liberates human passions from the mud of material interests, by elevating them to a feeling of the heroic, cannot be regarded with indifference by the moralist.

Sadler's Wells cannot be charged, as Drury Lane was under Macready's management, and the Princess's under Charles Kean, with hiding the shortcomings of the actors by brilliant scenic illusion. I would much sooner accuse it of paying too little attention to historic truth of costume, and the style of the decorations. Under the pretext of showing us Shakspere's plays in their simplicity, it approaches the nude a little too much. When I saw this primitive mounting of a play, I almost fancied I had gone back to the cradle of the dramatic art—the old Globe Theatre. It is not in vain that the laws of theatrical perspective have been improved, and I do not see why Shakspere's plays should absolutely refuse the assistance of the other arts. Has Sadler's Wells so many distinguished performers? No; but it has at least one quality, rarely found on the other London boards—I mean the harmony and *ensemble* of the acting. The smallest parts, instead of being left, as is too often the case on the English stage, to dreadful sticks, are filled with the most meritorious conscientiousness. But the head, the soul, the hero of this company, is Phelps, the tragedian.

This actor, who was born in 1806, began his career as a compositor at a printing-office in Devonport. While his fingers wandered about the cases and picked up the types, Samuel Phelps's mind loved to travel in the dramatic world, whose

luminous depths had been revealed to him by a perusal of Shakspere. The desire of witnessing the performances at large theatres soon attracted him to London, where he found work at the printing-office of the *Sun* newspaper. Like all persons affected by a taste for the drama, he soon resigned the trade that secured him a livelihood for the seductions of the stage. After playing with success at the Haymarket and Covent Garden, he formed the idea—in this following the example of nearly all the great English actors—of having a theatre of his own, and this theatre he consecrated to Shakspere. Phelps's talent is especially tragic, and he is before all worth seeing in "Virginius" and "Othello." Endowed with more strength and energy than tact, he frequently effaces the delicate touches of a character by the passion of his acting; but he is the true type of an English tragedian—vehement, pathetic, and letting his talent overflow like a torrent. Although he has paid but slight attention to comedy, we are indebted to him for having rehabilitated on the stage certain comic characters of Shakspere and Sheridan—that of Sir Peter Teazle, for instance—which before his time had been allowed to degenerate into burlesque. Which is the greater living tragedian—Charles Kean, or Samuel Phelps? is a question which at the present day divides English playgoers into two camps. Some years ago Kean and Phelps appeared together at the

Haymarket, in a drama of Sheridan Knowles—the Rose of Castille; and though Phelps had an ungrateful part, he is said to have surpassed his rival. In order to make a more thorough comparison between these two actors, Phelps personifying the character of Macbeth should be opposed to Kean playing Hamlet.

I have said how greatly the play of "Hamlet" on the English stage departed from the ideas and habits of the French theatre, and I believe that "Macbeth" offers even a greater novelty for the Frenchman. The opening of the play has something startling about it: it is night, but such a night as was never seen in our theatres, black, deep, and ominous, in the midst of which the vague forms of the three witches can be traced. These three parts are played at Sadler's Wells by men. Ought it to be so? Tradition appears to pronounce in favor of this singular substitution of sexes. At Drury Lane in the time of John Kemble and Edmund Kean, the three fatal sisters were personified by men, whose names have been handed down. We should, however, be inclined to believe, on the authority of Dr. Forman, that in Shakspere's day the malignant witches were represented by women, or at any rate by the young men who at that time played feminine parts, and who may be regarded as real actresses, since the ladies of that day derived their fashions and manners from them. If we consult the text

there are equally valid reasons for believing that the author had female spirits in view. We have to deal with beings without a sex, that in no way resemble the inhabitants of earth, and this feeling of indecision enhances the mysterious terror with which these mistresses of the night inspire us: at any rate by their dances, their language, and the ideas they arouse, do not these three personifications of fatality bear a greater resemblance to women than to men? It would be endurable were the parts of the witches given to young tragedians, but they are, on the contrary, generally intrusted to the low comedians of the company. It is very true that Shakspere describes them as wrinkled and savage figures. It is equally true that it is the poet's philosophic intention to establish a contrast between the degraded condition of these creatures and the extent of the supernatural power they exert: but must they on that account be made repulsive caricatures? Why not follow in this case the sentiment of the Greeks, who granted a sort of beauty even to the three Parcæ?

And yet it is only upon the English stage that it is possible to form an idea of the importance and stern grandeur which this intervention of the marvellous spreads over the entire action of the play. An English critic has justly observed that, were it not for the influence of the witches, which elevates, sustains, and consecrates to some extent the am-

bition of the usurper and his wife by the oracle of fate, Macbeth would be but a vulgar bandit. These visible forms, which to some extent carry his ideas and ruling passion into the infinitude of the supernatural world, give heroic proportions to the designs and character of the Scottish prince. You feel interested in him as in a man of destiny. The scenes wherein the witches appear, and which make the spectator pass act by act from dreamland into actual life, open out unlimited perspectives in the gloomy arrangement of the drama. These three ragged powers of the invisible world: these glacial figures that pass their thin fingers over their withered lips, or raise their fleshless arms to Heaven: the scene of the cauldron and the toad: the phantoms which these guardians of the secret of secrets cause to pass before Macbeth's eyes: the darkness visible that broods over the stage at the time, and covers the origin of gloomy events: the sullen rolling of the thunder—all adds inexpressible character to the action which is in itself so dramatic. This is the place where I could understand a necessity for introducing the effects of the *mise en scène*, and yet it appears that in the time of Shakspere, and long afterwards, the grand meteors of nature were not fully imitated on the stage. The "new thunder," as it was called toward the end of the last century, was introduced by one Dennis, for a tragedy of his own, which was with-

drawn after the first performance. A short time after, he was present at a representation of Macbeth, when a thunder of a strength hitherto unknown began roaring during the storm scene. Dennis recognised his property, and, jumping up in the middle of the pit, exclaimed, "My thunder, by Jove!"

Two actors and one actress stand out from the herd at Sadler's Wells. The actress is Miss Atkinson, who plays naturally the part of Lady Macbeth. She has caught some of the traits that suit the character of this demon of pride and ambition under the form of a woman. It is, in fact, in a just alliance of the woman and the demon that the perfection of this character would consist, for after all the feminine monster has not been able entirely to stifle her heart. From the moment when she walks on to the stage with a sombre air, devouring with eyes and mind the fatal letter in which Macbeth informs her of his interview with the witches, up to the famous sleep-walking scene in which, a living ghost, she seeks to remove the imaginary blood spot, Miss Atkinson valiantly sustains one of Shakspere's most overwhelming creations. During the scene of night and storm, at the moment when, after the murder, she snatches the dagger from Macbeth's hands, with what supreme disdain and what frightful strength of character does she try to raise her husband's downcast mind! Aided by the traditions of the

English stage and inspired by her own talent, Miss Atkinson, though not equal to Mrs. Siddons, and while deficient to some extent in dignity, plays this part better than, I believe, any French actress could play it: by better, I mean that national accent, that vein of blood, to use an expression of Shakspere's, which only belongs to the sisters of the mother country. In 1859 Miss Atkinson made a tour with the Sadler's Wells company through Germany, where she was enthusiastically received.

The second important part, that of Macduff, is filled by Marston. Mr. Henry Marston studied medicine and then the law, till the demon of the stage seized upon him: he had seen Elliston and Charles Kemble perform. The idea of following them in the dramatic career met with the greatest resistance in the prejudices of his family, and he was compelled to assume a feigned name. A worthy uncle, who was Mayor of Winchester, wishing to save this scamp of a nephew from disgracing an honorable family, came to an understanding with the manager to discharge him at the moment when the young actor expected to make a great hit in that city. These obstacles did not discourage him, and Marston is at the present day a meritorious tragedian, in spite of a serious defect in pronunciation. His best parts are those of Iago, the Ghost in "Hamlet," and Macduff in "Macbeth." As for the head of the company, Samuel Phelps, he is certainly one of

the last representatives of the great dramatic school. He has several of the qualities which nature refused Charles Kean, an imposing stature, a noble face and chivalrous manner. He seizes excellently the general idea of a character, and declaims Shakspere's verses with rare vigour, but at the same time with some degree of monotony and a certain emphasis, which he might have got rid of by proving more stern to himself. If study has rendered Charles Kean's acting cold, Phelps, on the other hand, would have gained greatly had he developed by hard work the germs of genius with which he seems gifted. He has not the less rendered great services to the cause of the poetical drama, by keeping alight within the walls of Sadler's Wells that Shaksperian lamp, at which, after a season of darkness and weakness, the national inspiration, which seems extinct at other theatres, must be rekindled, let us hope.

After Sadler's Wells we must mention Astley's Royal Amphitheatre, which was opened nearly at the same period. Originally it was only a circus, started by Philip Astley, who had been a light horseman in General Elliot's regiment. Though an excellent rider and great favourite of George III., Astley was, however, excessively ignorant. One day, during a rehearsal, the band suddenly stopped. "Halloo!" Astley said, addressing the conductor, "what's the matter now?" "There is a rest," the other answered. "A rest!" Astley

repeated, angrily; "I don't pay you to rest, but to play." It was the same man who, on hearing a manager complain of the conduct of his actors, said to him, "Why don't you treat them as I do mine? I never give them anything to eat till after the performance." He naturally alluded to his horses. Astley's Amphitheatre, though it has undergone various transformations since the death of the founder, is still a celebrated place for equestrian performances, exhibitions of trained ponies, elephants dancing the tight rope, and even wild beasts, more or less tame. I saw a grand spectacle performed there, in which a lion appeared that had killed a man the previous night. This painful circumstance added, as may be believed, a feeling of sadness and a species of tragic interest to the performance. The principal actor—I mean the lion—expressed no remorse for what he had done on the previous night: his face was calm, and even benignant: he performed his part as if nothing had occurred, and followed the "lion-conqueror" through the various situations of the piece.

I shall doubtless be asked what relation such a theatre can have with the poetic drama. It is the peculiar privilege of the great works of the human mind, that they lend themselves to circumstances. Mr. Cooke, one of the latest managers of Astley's Amphitheatre, had the idea of applying the resources and pomps peculiar to this theatre to

Shakspere's historical plays. He brought out "Richard III.," and for the first time humpbacked Richard was seen on the stage surrounded by his staff on horseback, and himself mounted on that famous steed White Surrey, whose name Shakspere has immortalised. The noble animal marched bravely through the battle, and died with an air of truth that affected the spectators. Encouraged by this success, Astley's company next appeared in "Henry IV." and "Macbeth." I will not assert that Shakspere's plays, thus converted into equestrian pieces, satisfied all artistic conditions; but when I look at the moral effect, I cannot but applaud the experiment. Astley's is the theatre of the people: here the East-end workmen, costermongers, and orange-women come to seek a few hours of recreation after the fatigues and struggles of a rough day's toil. Shakspere's plays, decorated rather than well played, hidden by processions and cavalcades, which, perhaps, denaturalised their character, but which after all were adapted to the instincts of a class of the population which lives specially through its eyes, at any rate allowed some portion of the poetical horizon to be glimpsed at. In any case, they happily occupied the place of those perilous performances which only arouse in man the feeling of savage strength.

Without adhering to seniority, should I not now transfer my investigations to some of the new

London theatres that attract a select audience? Here only one scruple checks me—where to find the legitimate drama! I must not be accused of a wish to render the dramatic spirit of the English stage stationary, or to close the gates of the temple after Shakspere: for I should be only too happy to find another vein in the mine of living writers. It is certainly not space that the young authors are deficient in, for there are at present twenty-four licensed theatres in London, among which nine at least would be ready to receive any original drama that held out a reasonable guarantee of success. I will not say that this phenomenon has never been witnessed, but who is there that will not allow that the market is overstocked with translations from the French? Sometimes the larceny is more or less concealed by an alteration of names, places, and characters; but the idea and action of the piece present no doubt as to its origin. The most skilful of these adapters (for the trade has a name) is indubitably Mr. Tom Taylor, who displays indefatigable activity in purveying for the principal London theatres. Some of these smugglers of French wit try to excuse themselves by invoking the example of Shakspere, who, like Molière, took his property wherever he found it; but, modesty aside, they seem to forget that if the Bard of Avon did not always create, he at any rate transformed what he borrowed. The present state of the

stage in France, however, is not sufficiently brilliant to illumine two countries; and it is easy to imagine what the moon of such a sun must be.

Authors and managers throw on one another the defects of a system, which, if continued, would eventually stifle, in the country of the drama, even that sharp feeling of self, to which the Anglo-Saxon race owes, even in the arts, a portion of its conquests. According to the managers, original dramas are rarely good enough to be produced before the public. If we may believe the authors, the theatres, on the other hand, oppose the progress of the national mind, by surreptitiously favouring a species of literary piracy. The truth lies, I fear, between the two. English literature, though so rich in authors, is at the present day poor in real dramatic writers. In this state of affairs, London managers find a commercial interest in producing pieces that have already proved successful elsewhere. It is for them a guarantee, and, as it were, an insurance against pecuniary losses, which in the event of a failure would shake the fortunes of their theatre. Instead of risking their capital on unknown wares, they mortgage it in this way upon the good taste of the Parisian public.

One of the new London theatres which has risen highest under the régime of theatrical liberty is the Adelphi. The spot was to a certain extent predestined, for a farm that formerly belonged

to Nell Gwynne once occupied its site by the road side. Under the stage of this theatre still runs a stream of pure water, which retains her name: it was here that Nell stopped to drink, while proceeding to the village of Charing, where Charles II. was expecting her to eat fish and drink curds and whey. Here too a room for entertainments was erected in 1802, or a century and a half later. The founder was a manufacturer of colours, who had invented a new sort of blue, and who was called for that reason True Blue Scott. He made a fortune, for his discovery gave a peculiar shade to dresses and other articles of the toilette which feminine coquetry is fond of. Having been gifted by Nature with a certain amount of imagination, True Blue Scott produced at the new rooms all sorts of amusements and curious scenes, while careful not to trench on the legitimate drama. His daughter, Miss Scott, was the principal actress, and wrote pieces she performed herself, which, however, did not prevent her dancing on the tight rope. Finding this speculation quite as good as grinding colours, Scott threw off the mask he had hitherto worn, and built a real theatre, which he christened the Sans Pareil: at a later date this same house became the Strand, and finally, about the year 1821, the Adelphi. Like all the other London theatres, the latter passed through various hands, but was always successful, as the amount of the

receipts testified. A number of dramas which have held their ground on the English stage, first saw light within its walls. The manager of the Adelphi is now Mr. Webster, who, in 1858, finding the old house small and inconvenient, built a new one under the title of the New Adelphi.

Like most of the managers of the London theatres, Benjamin Webster is also an actor, and one of the first class. He is descended, it is said, from the aristocratic family of the Buches, who retired with the Duke of Norfolk into Yorkshire, after the battle of Bosworth. He at first felt an inclination for the sea : but his character and fancy soon launched him on the no less stormy sea of the theatre. His first appearance did not at all announce what he would some day become, for he assumed the spangled dress of Harlequin. From this part to that of Thessalus in Alexander the Great, which he filled some time after, the leap was considerable. Having succeeded beyond all expectation, he resolved to devote himself to the drama. At that time, however, Webster was only a nomadic actor, travelling from town to town, and performing all sorts of characters, in all sorts of theatres. Through this rude training, he at any rate acquired experience, and that gift which the English call versatility, by virtue of which an actor can assume any character. After a life full of episodes and adventures, after traversing England and Ireland, Benjamin Webster at length came to try his for-

tune in London. He everywhere found the stage occupied by old actors who were not desirous of making room for a new man, and often left him wretched parts. The fashionable world had never heard his name, when in 1825, "Measure for Measure" was played at Drury Lane. The part of Pompey, the clown, had been filled up to that time by a comedian who was suddenly taken ill, and it was given to young Webster, who had only a few hours to learn it in. His reputation was made on that evening: the public, the press, and the manager recognised in him a talent which had not been suspected up to that day.

Having thus broken the ice, Mr. Webster soon saw higher and more extensive prospects before him. He went to the Haymarket, of which theatre he became manager at a later date, and which he eventually surrendered to Buckstone, in order to take the helm of affairs at the Adelphi. Shall I follow this actor through the scenes of his transformations? It would be as profitable to try and fix the changes of Proteus. There is no character or social condition in English, Scotch, or Irish life which Webster has not personified on the stage. What I admire most in him, is the thoroughly Britannic art with which he indicates certain suppressed emotions: the force of passion concealed by a species of solemn and imposing calmness is a national trait which the actor has marvellously seized, and whose nuances he expresses with

penetrating truth. An Englishman who becomes affected may be compared to the "weeping rock": the surface remains hard and impenetrable to the eyes of those who know not how to discover the tear—the drop of water. From this point of view, Mr. Benjamin Webster is more than an actor: he is a living portrait of the national type, to any one at all acquainted with England, and offers an excellent subject for studying manners.

As manager of the New Adelphi, Mr. Webster has equally rendered service by seeking to rekindle among his fellow-citizens the sacred fire of dramatic composition. I will not assert, however, that he has on that account resisted the invasion of foreign pieces. One of the best creations of the actor, the part of Robert Landry, is derived from a French melodrama, in which the principal character was represented by Bocage, and now adapted to the English stage under the title of the "Dead Heart."* Still he has shown that he did not enter on the borrowing system through any motives of economy, for the Adelphi is reckoned among those London theatres which remunerate their authors best. A few years ago, this house had attached to it such names as those of Sheridan Knowles, Bulwer, Jerrold, and Westland

* It is to be regretted that M. Esquiros has not specified the melodrama, as it would clear up an interesting point. Mr. Watts Phillips swears by the gods that the piece is entirely original, and that Mr. Dickens borrowed from him that extraordinary similarity to be found in the "Tale of Two Cities."

Marston.* In spite of the species of lethargy from which the dramatic art suffers, Mr. Webster is one of the believers in the resources of the Anglo-Saxon language and genius : he hopes that the strength of the sick man will be restored, and yet proved triumphant on the stage. In order to expedite this happy result, he offered large prizes to any one who would produce a good drama or comedy ; but what golden shower could fecundate on the field of literature works whose germ does not exist for the moment ? The Adelphi, however, recently obtained one of those successes which promise better days. For the last six months only one question has been asked in London : "Have you seen the 'Colleen Bawn ?'" This piece, adapted from Gerald Griffin's novel, "The Collegians," transports us to the lakes and cabins of green Ireland. The author of the piece, Mr. Dion Boucicault, himself performs the part of a young simple Irishman, and his wife that of a youthful, tender, and virtuous peasant girl. A species of primitive freshness, affecting situations, rustic scenes, a picture of Irish manners which possesses the rare merit of not being overcoloured, the great scenes of nature happily mingled with the affections of the human heart, made the fortune of this dramatic eclogue, whose success was not exhausted after 150 representations.

* Mr. Marston is one of the dramatic authors who have been most successful in giving a theatrical form to the philosophic aspirations of our age. This rare merit is most perceptible in his play of Strathmore.

The Adelphi has a rival in the Lyceum theatre, situate at the corner of a neighbouring street which runs into the Strand. The first room under this name was built about the year 1765, as an academy of painting. We find it afterwards converted into a concert room, and then into a panorama, where somebody read a description of celebrated spots represented on the canvas. The Lyceum theatre, as it now exists, only dates back to 1830. The direction of this theatre was for a time in the hands of a French actress, Madame Vestris. A female manager was rather a considerable novelty in a country where, as we know, women only appeared on the stage after the Restoration. Things, however, have altered since then: not only do the London theatres owe a great deal to the talent of the actresses, but some of the latter manage great dramatic enterprizes. At the head of this Lyceum theatre was another French actress, Madame Celeste, during last year, but she has since been succeeded by Mr. Edmund Falconer, who has made an extraordinary sensation with the "Peep o' Day." The destiny of this wandering star,—"Madam," as the English affectionately call her,—is most singular. Born at Paris in 1814, Madame Celeste was entered, when very young, as a pupil at the Académie Royale de Musique. At the age of 14 or 15 she began performing at obscure theatres in the suburbs, when she was offered an engagement in America. She accepted it, and visited nearly

every town in the United States. As a sign of the alliance with the Anglo-Saxon race, which she was destined not to break again, she married in the New World a gentleman of the name of Elliot, who died a few years later, leaving a daughter, at present married in Baltimore. In 1830, Madame Celeste left America and sailed for England. About this time she appeared at the Liverpool theatre, where she took the part of Fenella in the play of Masaniello. The actress had a great disadvantage at that time, for she did not understand English. Even after a long residence in Great Britain, her accent has remained faithful, as she says, to her mother country. The English, who are aware of the enormous difficulties of pronunciation which their language presents to a stranger, proved themselves indulgent on this head, and recognised rare and delicate qualities in the debutante. At the present day, however, Madame Celeste is charged with displaying a certain artistic coquetry in retaining a French accent, which, at least in the mouth of a woman, seems singularly to please a British public. After performing in drama and pantomime at Edinburgh, Dublin, and other cities of the United Kingdom, she at length appeared at Drury Lane, in 1833, where she failed. Then, by one of those changes of opinion which are often as capricious as fortune, she obtained, a few years later, at the same theatre and in the same piece, an enthusiastic success. Still she returned

to the United States, in pursuance of the terms of her engagement. This time, her progress was a triumph: saluted by the soldiers under arms, applauded by the multitude in the streets, decorated with the title of "Free citizen of the Union," she was for some time the idol of American society.

Loaded with honours and money, Madame Celeste crossed the Channel for the fourth time, and settled, in 1837, in her adopted country, kind, hearty old England. After performing at the Haymarket and at Drury Lane; after even undertaking the leading parts in one or two of Shakspere's plays; she remained a long time at the Adelphi, where she wedded her talent with that of Mr. Webster. Several modern English pieces owe to her a great portion of the success they obtained. At last, having dissolved partnership with Mr. Webster in 1859, Madame Celeste resolved to have a theatre of her own. The Lyceum being empty, she took it, and on the 29th November of the same year, she delivered an opening address according to the English fashion, in which she explained her views as to the management of the theatre. This actress is greatly liked by a London audience: her principal feature is Parisian lightness, grace, and elegance, fitted to some extent to the English stage. At the Lyceum, romantic drama, comedietta and vaudeville are performed.*

* For the sake of fact, it is perhaps as well to make a few corrections here. Madame Celeste did not take the Lyceum:

The other theatres of central London would teach us nothing new from the point of view we are engaged with, for we should find there old acquaintances more or less disfigured by their voyage to England. At the St. James's, one of the most elegant of London theatres, we find a Dame de St. Tropez, who has figured on our Boulevard stages, in which the part created by Frederick Lemaitre is filled by Mr. Alfred Wigan, a talented actor, manager, and literary gentleman, whom we should prefer in an original character, where he would enjoy all the liberty of dramatic invention. At the Princess's we should see once again Ruy Blas, with an actor half English, half French, and an old Parisian acquaintance, M. Fechter, who has since played with success the part of Hamlet, which it is so difficult for a foreigner to render and interpret before an English audience. Since Charles Kean's departure, the Princess's has strûggled with some degree of success to support the legitimate drama. At the Olympic and the Strand, which is under the management of a lady, Miss Swanborough, who is at the same time a distinguished actress, we should probably discover, by the side of extravagant farces, the genius of a domestic drama which, at any rate, possesses a

she was placed in it. She ruined a good chance—for she had the sympathy of Londoners at the time, owing to circumstances on which it is unnecessary to dwell—by producing pieces which did not answer expectation, and afforded another proof, were that needed, that female management is a failure.

national character. Miss Swanborough began by performing at London at the great theatres, and in great parts; but led away by her taste, or by that of the public, from the heights of the Shaksperian drama to a more simple style, she at the present day confines herself to domestic comedy. The latter form greatly pleases the English; and the talent of this actress regenerated the little Strand theatre, which had fallen very low. Unfortunately Miss Swanborough has recently married and left the stage.*

At the Olympic reigns a great comedian, whom I should regret to pass over in silence, so thoroughly is his name attached, in the mind of the English, to the character of their stage. Frederick Robson began by being apprentice to a copper-plate engraver, but before his apprenticeship was ended, he abandoned the *burin*, in order, as he himself says with a laugh, to engrave other impressions on the theatrical public. He might have shone in tragedy, for nature has marvellously endowed him as regards intellect and expression; but not finding his stature sufficiently majestic for noble parts, he invented an intermediate style, in which high dramatic faculties are combined, without any effort, with the qualities of an excellent burlesque actor. His acting is thoroughly original, and I should

* I am happy to say that the Strand survives its loss. With Miss Marie Wilton, Miss Ada Swanborough, Rogers, and Clarke, it can defy all opposition in its peculiar style.

pity any man who attempted to imitate it. Robson, at the time when I wrote this sketch, filled the principal part in a comedy which has at least the merit of being English, and which may be regarded as an attempt in a new line—"The Chimney Corner," by Mr. Craven. It is, however, Robson who is the life, power, and, to some extent, the author, of this drama. The way in which he passes, by sudden or graduated transitions, from the intensity of the most affecting passion to droll or buffoon effects, from laughter to tears, from poignant emotion to the *bonhomie* of the father of a family; the real dignity with which he heightens at certain moments the trivial details and miseries of a tradesman's home; the profound study of the human heart, without forgetting its ridiculous aspect—all this constitutes a performance with which I can compare nothing I remember offered by French actors in the days when I was at home.

If we pass from the central theatres to other theatres of London, situate in eccentric regions, ought we not to expect to see the artistic feeling more and more degraded? There reigns, upon a pile of victims, the melodrama of fire and blood, loaded with crimes, poison, and furious declamations. Dramatic literature has hardly anything to do with these little theatres. An adapter, who is paid by the yard, and whom the English designate by the title of "Stock author," is attached to the establishment, just like the tailor and the scene

painter. It is his business to translate or fit the parts out of French pieces. The time he does not spend in writing he devotes to the stage, where he generally fills with honour an utility part. What the directors of the minor London theatres most detest is, as they say, metaphysics. Under this title, they mean any tendency to a study of moral life. One of them, forming, according to my opinion, a far too incorrect idea of his audience, said, after the first performance of a piece which was of a slightly elevated character, "That piece might succeed, but merely on condition that it compelled the audience to return three or four times to understand it."

Heaven forbid, however, that I should throw any discredit on the East End theatres! These theatres satisfy a noble want, and render real services. Nowhere else can be found an audience more attentive, more enthusiastic, or more eager for powerful and generous emotions. If the food served up at these places to the tumultuous appetites of the mob is more frequently coarse, the dramas of the Elizabethan era, as well as two or three modern pieces which success has consecrated, are produced there from time to time, and provided that the ideas are clear, the language is masculine, and the situations energetic, the entire audience is soon overwhelmed with passion or affected by pity. At one of these out of the way theatres I found, to my great surprise, a real

tragedian, one of the last representatives of the great Shaksperian school, Mr. Creswick, one of the joint-managers of the Surrey Theatre. The old drama, having been abandoned by the *jeunesse dorée* of the West End, has erected its throne beyond the Thames, and amongst a population of artizans. Another theatre, the Grand National Standard, whose manager is also an actor, Mr. John Douglass, engages for a time and successively nearly all the great London actors and actresses. The advantage of this arrangement is to bring at slight expense (for the price of the seats is more and more reduced the further you go from the centre of the town), the principal talents of the English stage, in their principal parts, before an East End public. Theatres thus managed very certainly exert a happy influence, and no one could tell what a loss both the morality and education of the lower classes would sustain in certain quarters of London, which are deprived of other amusements of the sort, if ever these foci of light were extinguished.

In London the theatres, especially the old ones, leave much to be desired, as regards architecture and comfort. At the first glance, the character of a people more anxious for business than pleasure is recognised. The City merchants—I allude especially to those of the old stamp—rarely go to the theatres. The English working-classes, on the contrary, testify a sort of fury for dramatic

performances. It is wonderful to see at the crowded East End theatres with what simple energy the spectators applaud persecuted virtue and execrate triumphant crime! In their eyes, the actor is no longer an actor, but really the good or bad person in flesh and bone he represents. In this respect the man who plays the part of a traitor is most unhappy. A poor wandering actor, of the name of Melmoth, had only one success in his life; it is true that it occurred in Scotland, where he acted the part of Monteith in the national play of "Wallace." He performed on this occasion so naturally and truthfully, that he drew on himself the hatred of the whole audience; young men waited for him at the corner of a street after the fall of the curtain, and gave him a severe chastisement. The beaten actor, proud and happy, was fond of telling this anecdote, declaring that it was the handsomest compliment ever paid him. The same thing almost happened some years ago at a minor London theatre, to an actor who represented an Austrian officer, and who had the misfortune to bear a striking likeness to General Haynau.

After having passed in review the old great theatres, and those which have risen since 1832 on the ruins of privilege, are we not led to the same conclusion—the decay of the British drama? The character of that decay, however, requires to be defined. The proportion of theatres to the population is at the present day higher in London

than it ever has been. More plays are also produced than was formerly the case; but in the majority of these washed-out mediocre works, which are most frequently borrowed from the French or German school, who would venture to seek the great features of the Elizabethan drama? We ask ourselves what can have been the cause of a sterility which compelled recourse to plagiarism? I generally hear it said in England, that the reason why dramatic literature is not now flourishing, is the parsimony with which the theatres requite the services of authors. Figures and arguments are not wanting to support this theory, According to the common opinion, good writers, not being encouraged to work for the stage, turn their attention to periodicals and books. Even those who began with the theatre, abandon, it is said, after one or two successful attempts, the cradle of their success, as they are humiliated at finding their rate of remuneration inferior to that of the actors and actresses. In this state of things, those managers who cannot or will not offer clever writers honourable terms, are compelled to surrender themselves blindly to the adapters, and turn to the resources offered them by foreign theatres. In conclusion it is said, "Let the London theatres pay their authors better, and the dramatic art will speedily spring up again."

I am bound to confess that this argument,

powerful as it is, has not convinced me. If the germs of dramatic talent really existed among the young authors of England, a mere pecuniary consideration would not prevent their growth. Is it not the character of all great professions to show themselves disinterested? Were not most of the grand works which have survived time conceived under circumstances that not merely excluded the idea of material remuneration, but even that of success? It would be a strange doctrine that tried to substitute self-esteem, or a desire of gain, for the impulses of nature, as the supreme influence in mental things! No, humanity has not yet descended so low as that. Besides, in order to refute this error entirely, I only need to cite facts. In France the theatre stands under very different relations to literature, from a material point of view, than it does in England. Among ourselves the stage enriches authors most. I do not see, however, that the dramatic art has acquired such enviable glory in our day, and am inclined to believe that the great profits have excluded or impoverished talent by encouraging the trade of the play-wright.

I should be disposed to seek the causes of the decay of the drama in England elsewhere. One fact strikes me, when I study the history of the British stage, and it is this: in proportion as the drama gets further from the original poverty of the old playhouses, it loses in moral grandeur

what it gains in mounting, decorations, and external splendor. In this respect it resembles religions, whose spirit is often stifled in the end under the weight of ceremonial. When was human poetry ever more proud, when did it ever attain more brilliant elevation, than in the old open-air theatres, which were, to some extent, the cradle and the swaddling-clothes of the dramatic art? At the present day, the English stage is a powerful machine, moved by enormous capital, supported by the talent of painters and the art of the costumier, and working with a skill that was unknown to Shakspere: but the soul has retired before the very progress of the machinist. In a word, I am afraid that the alliance between art and trade has been fatal to the drama. Far be it from me to say that the managers of the large London theatres are insensible to literary beauties: I do not believe so for a moment; but they stand in a different position from that of the spectator. We must not forget that a heavy responsibility rests upon them: their great business is not to produce a new English dramatic school, but to pay their company and meet their engagements. I cannot be angry with them for feeling a repugnance to appearing in the Insolvent Court; and the bankruptcy of their theatre is in their sight a far more serious matter than the degeneration of poetry and the overflow of foreign pieces on the English stage.

This predominance of the industrial element has given accessories an importance and value that could be easily foreseen: for is it not a principle of political economy admitted generally by men of business, that everything must be turned to a use? A story is told that Douglas Jerrold was one day in the sanctum of a London manager, who placed before the author, then very young and little known, a shabby admiral's coat he had just bought of a Jew. "Can you not make use of this?" he said to him. "I want a little piece from your pen, and there is a subject for you." This manager was, after all, an utilitarian. When we consider, in addition, the enormous outlay that presses on the great dramatic enterprises of London, we shall not feel at all surprised that they too often have recourse to means of excitement unworthy of the art, in order to galvanise the morbid indifference of the public.

Were the managers of English theatres questioned, we should everywhere receive the same answer: "We no longer play the great poetic drama, because this drama does not clear its expenses. Even in the glorious times of the Shaksperian school, when the Kembles, Edmund Kean, and Mrs. Siddons flourished on the stage; when there were only three patented theatres that had the right to produce pieces of this nature; these celebrated actors more than once played to empty houses. Yes, even at that time Covent

Garden was obliged to have recourse to Bluebeard and equestrian performances to support the beauties of the great dramatic poets." Here, however, an objection offers itself. Was it not, on the contrary, the fact, that these grand spectacular pieces, so sonorous, empty, and which sprang from the thoroughly financial organisation of modern theatres, led the English public away from idealism, in order to attract it, at least as regards the stage, to the worship of material curiosity? I have heard it stated that one of the chalk cliffs which at Dover form the coast of Albion, a rock to which tradition gives the name of Shakspere's Cliff, is about to be thrown down—if it be not already done—to yield a passage for a railway. Is not this a sign of the times? as Mr. Disraeli says.

English writers stand aloof from the stage at the present day less, I believe, through pecuniary considerations, than through the obstacles they meet with there. The London managers, in order to restore vitality to their theatres, have recently introduced what is called the starring system. This system consists in intrusting the fortunes of the undertaking to one or two names the public are fond of. These stars are absorbing, and like to form a vacuum around themselves, and the result is that the remainder of the company is more or or less sacrificed to a few great persons. The latter impose on the dramatic author and on the

manager himself very harsh conditions, and they must have the lion's part in all new plays. The rule is that the manager alone accepts or rejects manuscript plays: but before putting the work in rehearsal, it is read to the actors, who can refuse to perform, if the part does not appear to them properly calculated to bring out their qualities, at times even their defects. It is certainly true that in such a case the manager can stand on his right and discharge the actor: but who would dare to offend a star? Hence the leading actors exercise a sort of indirect dictatorship over the literary management of the theatre. The dramatic author has also more than one self-esteem to propitiate; and in England the division of labour seems to have imprinted an indelible stamp on the separation of characters upon the stage. If the "old virtuous" have no part, he will not fail to exclaim that the piece is immoral: if the "sentimental miss" has been forgotten, or merely placed in the back ground, she will say very audibly that the author may have talent, but he has no heart: if the "old obstinate" does not see a chance of appearing in his admiral's uniform which has been worn threadbare by honourable stage service, he will ask why people are surprised at the decadence of the stage, since the English theatre abandons its national glories. More than all the rest, the low comedian is a good-humoured tyrant whose favour must be courted. Not only does he wish to have a good

part, but he will not suffer the other performers to have any as good: to hear him talk, he is too conscientious to remain in a theatre where he has nothing to do. We can judge from this the embarrassment of a young author who ventures on this career.

Nor must we forget that every London theatre is in the hands of a principal actor, who performs the functions of manager at the same time. From a technical point of view this system may be advantageous, but does it not also produce serious inconveniences? I believe that it tends to prevent a satisfactory combination of dramatic talent. Nothing in the world, for instance, would induce Charles Kean to act at Sadler's Wells under Samuel Phelps. Other tragedians, among them Anderson, Brooke, and Charles Dillon, doubtless for the same reason, lead a more or less wandering life; now, there is an English proverb to the effect that "a rolling stone gathers no moss," and it is equally true that the actor does not acquire a certain degree of perfection, unless he be fixed at one theatre. If, as happens frequently, the manager be a lady, the objection becomes all the greater, for we can easily suppose that she will suffer no rival near her throne. As each of these actor-managers excels in a peculiar style, it is also perfectly natural that he should try to impose his stamp—if the expression may be allowed—on the theatre he manages. Must not this sovereignty of the actors

injure the serious interests of the drama? In this state of things, in fact, the drama no longer represents human life, but the conditions of the company and, before all, the qualities or defects of the actor who manages it. We have, then, small temples of art in which a powerful individuality triumphs, but have we a theatre?

Latterly, some organs of the press have demanded that the Government should interfere, and pay a subvention, as in France, to certain theatres. I doubt whether the English Government ever had the slightest intention to follow this advice; but who does not see that the present organisation of the London theatres would be an obstacle to such a measure? I can understand a Government being anxious to possess the depôt of dramatic master-pieces and protecting a company on this consideration; but I could not understand it bestowing its favours on individuals, however eminent they might be.

Ought this decline of the British drama, which is stated to be the fact by the British press itself, to cause any excessive anxiety? Whatever may be said to the contrary, an indomitable craving for the ideal exists in the Anglo-Saxon race. The desire of travelling in the realms of fiction and of heroic phantasies, and of contemplating at the theatre the gloomy, imposing, or tragical phases of humanity, is as lively and universal as it ever was among the English. I judge of this by the eager-

ness with which the public flock toward all tentatives in which they fancy they perceive a regeneration of the drama, and before all by the durable and persistent success of the small number of modern pieces that deserve to live. It would be irrational to deny dramatic genius to a nation that gave to the world a William Shakspere, and which at the same time has produced a Ben Jonson, a Fletcher, a Beaumont, a Massinger, and a John Ford. Such a nation cannot resign itself for any length of time to live by borrowing, and it wants a theatre which is not a reflex of foreign manners. The English drama, in the midst of the trials of an apparent decadence, is suffering from the disease of transformation.

The great types of the Shaksperian theatre seem at the present day exhausted; modern society, Heaven be thanked for it! no longer produces those epic crimes or absorbing existences which, two or three centuries ago, concentrated on themselves the entire interest, both in the world of facts and in that of the imagination. Hence the invention of modern ages must have resource to other sources. It is still the function of the drama, as in Shakspere's day, to hold up the mirror to nature, but is not Nature herself undergoing the pressure of the times and the influence of human institutions? Already some English dramatic authors have turned their efforts to a portrayal of domestic life and have asked of the family, and

the home, new elements for the regeneration of the stage. This form of the drama is, besides, in perfect harmony with the traditions of the second-class English theatres. If the attempts hitherto made in this direction have not proved entirely successful, it is because the exact point between coarse reality and fancy has not yet been attained. Let us hope that the Saxon genius will eventually find again the path to which so many glorious reminiscences recall it, and regain on the stage, as it has done in other branches of literature, the lofty initiative that belongs to it.

CHAPTER VI.

ENGLISH PANTOMINES—THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN—MUSIC HALLS —MIRACLE PLAYS—EASTER BURLESQUES—HISTORY OF PANTOMIMES—BOXING NIGHT—THE WORKSHOP—THE PAINTING ROOM—BEHIND THE SCENES—BALLET GIRLS—STAGE MORALS—MR. NELSON LEE.

THE theatres were formerly free from State interference in England. About the year 1736, a comedy by Fielding, called "Pasquin," and performed at the Haymarket, called the attention of the government to the political satires of the stage. Another piece, "The Golden Princess," was offered to Mr. Gifford, the manager of a small theatre which then stood in Goodman's Fields. This piece was full of the coarsest attacks on the cabinet, Parliament, and George the Second. Mr. Gifford, doubtless frightened by the responsibility he would incur in allowing such a piece to be performed, took the MS. with him and carried it to the Prime Minister, who profited by the circumstance to pass through Parliament an Act known by the name of the Licensing Bill. The two first works stopped by the censorship, were Henry Brooks's "Gustavus Vasa" and Thomson's "Eleo-

nora." In both cases, the British public were so indignant at the new restriction laid on the liberty of the stage, that a subscription was opened in favour of the authors, which produced upward of one thousand pounds.

At the present day the London theatres are placed under the authority of the Lord Chamberlain. Pieces, before being represented, must have been read and received the approval of an official called the Licenser of Plays. This species of censorship constitutes an anomaly in a country where the press enjoys absolute liberty. I am bound to say, however, that the licenser is an official independent of the ministry, and that his functions would doubtless have ceased long ago, if he did not exercise them with extreme discretion. In most of the alterations made in dramatic MS., he restricts himself to protecting the character of persons, and frequently that of the actors themselves, by effacing names and any too direct allusions. By the side of the theatres properly so called, concert—and music-rooms have recently sprung up which are independent of the Lord Chamberlain. These offer an alarming rivalry to the licensed playhouses; for little pieces or scenes are performed there which nightly attract a large crowd. Many English prefer these places to the theatre, as they enjoy greater liberty there, being able to smoke and drink their glass of beer.

Such is the constitution of the various places of

amusement in their relation to the State; but it is especially the theatrical world with which we desire an acquaintance. The drama was able to teach us but little with respect to English manners: will it be the same with pantomime and farce? In the less important branches we shall perhaps discover a deeper trace of the national character. Laughter, the faculty which, according to some physiologists, separates man from the other animals, also distinguishes the human races from each other.

A French writer, who spent a few days last year in London, and went one evening to the theatre, spoke to me with amazement about the puerile character of the English stage. It was Christmas time, and as a traveller, he was unaware that throughout England that season of the year belongs to the children. They reign for six weeks like perfect little despots, not only over their homes, but also over the public amusements. Two reasons may be alleged for this; in the first place, the winter vacation, which coincides with the Christmas festivities, and also a vague religious reminiscence. We must not forget that in England the theatre issued from the church. The old Catholic priests, with their mysteries, moralities, and miracles, were the first theatrical managers in the present land of Protestantism.

At the present day, it is true, the theatre is entirely separated from the church; but for all that,

some customs have retained traces of the primitive union, which the Reformation itself and the progress of enlightenment have been unable to efface. The English stage is still governed to some extent by the ecclesiastical calendar and liturgy. Two Christian festivals, Christmas and Easter, especially gave origin to a very peculiar species of entertainments. The Easter entertainments have lost much of their olden splendour, though only during the last few years. The railways are accused, and correctly so, of having contributed to this result: the various railway managers announce for the holy week, on the walls and even on the backs of perambulating advertisers, pleasure trains, trips, and excursions, which offer a formidable rivalry to the old Easter attractions of the theatres. Many families now prefer going to Brighton, Dover, or the Isle of Wight, to witness the festival of new-born nature, the sea lit up by the first sunbeam and the birds returning from exile, to seeing, as they formerly did, in a more or less dingy theatre, the moving panoramas, interminable processions, parodies, and farces which once distinguished this season at all the theatres. Old Christmas having the good fortune to arrive at the season of rain, snow, and short gloomy days, has alone retained its privileges. One fact that surprised me on reaching England was to find, under a very different climate and among an utterly different people, the same custom I had seen flourishing at

Marseilles. There is this distinction, however, that at Marseilles small mysteries about the birth of the Saviour are performed for the children, while in London and other English towns, this same festival of the Nativity is joyously saluted by pantomimes, which have a thoroughly profane character.

The Christmas pantomime forms one of the most marked contrasts with the Shaksperian drama—*si parva licet componere magnis*—to be found on the English stage. And yet, who cannot see that this style of piece did not originate in Great Britain? The names of Harlequin, Pantaloon, and Columbine reveal without any doubt an Italian origin. The only English personage in the piece might be the clown, and yet a resemblance may be found in him with the Neapolitan Scapin: but at what period did an Italian company settle in England and acclimatise beneath the pale sky of the Thames a species of dumb comedy which first saw light in the country of the sun? This is a question upon which the best dramatic archæologists could only offer me imperfect information.

The history of pantomime in England is very obscure; and some English antiquaries, perhaps taking advantage of this obscurity, have tried to give it an ancient and thoroughly national origin. It is a recognised fact that throughout the Middle Ages the stage was divided into three platforms. On the upper stage the Supreme Being reigned, seated on a throne; on the second platform

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appeared the angels and the spirits of the just admitted to the favours of Paradise; the third was occupied by simple mortals, male and female, while in one corner of this lower zone yawned a frightful cavern called the mouth of the infernal regions. Omitting the Eternal Father, who, of course, is never seen in the divertisements of the modern theatres, and the angels, whose place has been taken by fairies or peris, as in Muhammed's Paradise, this division gives a fair notion of the English pantomime. The first scene is still usually laid in a gloomy cavern, whence demons and imps spread over the stage, as they did in the Middle Ages, exciting the laughter and terror of the audience by their gestures and grimaces. If we admit that pantomime may have emerged from this diabolical den, the Italian characters could only have supplied masks to the framework of a piece which had long been in existence already. However this may be, the first English pantomime whose memory the annals of the stage preserve, only dates from 1702. It was played at Drury Lane under the title of the "Tavern-bilkers," under the management of a dancing master of the name of Weaver.

The Christmas pantomime—and it is the only one I have in view at present—has doubtless, in the course of time, undergone considerable modifications. In the first, the name no longer suits it, or at least only partially suits it. This style of

piece is at the present day divided into two parts, one in which the actors speak and which is most generally written in verse, and another which is left to dumb actors. This circumstance confirms, in my opinion, the foreign origin, if not of the pantomime itself, at least of the principal persons that figure in it. At the outset the actors, indubitably, did not speak, and they had good reasons for it; but in proportion as the English blood became infused into the Italian types, it was found that it would be advantageous to support the mimic efforts by jokes and a burlesque dialogue. The same thing therefore happened to pantomime as happens in England to many exotic customs, and especially to certain words of the language. The foreign origin of these words cannot be gainsayed; but the Anglo-Saxon pronunciation modifies them to such an extent, and gives them such a national stamp, that the ear of the people from whom they were borrowed cannot recognise them. It is thus that at the present day Harlequin, Columbine, and Pantaloon have nothing in common with their Italian ancestors.

The predominant character of pantomime among southern nations is expression: and it has been rightly defined as a portrayal of ideas by gestures. Such is not now the salient character of the same style of piece among the English. They have given to it that which constitutes the power, conquests, and influence of their race all over the

world—I mean action. As for the play of the features, it need not even be mentioned, for the faces of the actors are covered by enormous masks. Furious pirouettes, break-neck leaps, prodigious feats, a constant succession of human tornados that sweep everything before them on the stage—in a word, movement in its most frenzied form—such things occupy much greater space than mimic efforts in the dumb portion of the amusements annually renewed in honour of old Christmas. The English stage at that time resembles the streets of London, with the mirage of business, sudden changes, engines thundering over the roofs of the houses, and all the obstinate labour of discharging vessels.

The pantomime proper is always attached to a piece of a more or less fairy-like nature, of which it forms the final episode. The subject of this piece is most generally taken from what the English call a nursery tale. The range is almost inexhaustible: you can choose between "Peter Wilkins," "Gulliver's Travels," "The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe," "Sinbad the Sailor," "Fair Rosamond," "Jack the Giant Killer," or any other history of the good old times. The more extravagant and fanciful the plot is the better, as it is easier to introduce into it dances, magical effects, and all the magnificence of scenery and decorations. At times even, the pantomime is merely founded on a popular song—the one played last year at the

Haymarket with great success, was only the development of two lines English children sing to the ladybirds,—

> "Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home;
> Thy house is a-fire, thy children alone."

These Christmas pieces also offer another species of interest; the pantomime is the comedy of the year, as it readily lends itself to every sort of divagation and ridiculous topics of the day; and at times even those political events to which the attention of the newspaper is directed, are passed in review.*

At the close of 1860, the commercial treaty with France naturally supplied scope for fun to more than one London theatre. The invasion of animated wine-bottles, the fears of Heavy Stout menaced in his gloomy empire—I mean the cellar, —the patriotic reflections of Grog, who, representing the English navy, declared that he had nothing to fear from foreigners, could not fail of gaining applause. The spirit of Plagiarism appeared with a book, on which was written in large letters, "original;" the ghost of French Literature seized the book, exclaiming, "Excuse me, but that book is mine." Miss Crinoline herself, though rather old, was not forgotten by pantomime; but the in-

* In the latter respect the English pantomime bears some resemblance to the *revues de l'année* performed at the French minor theatres. There is, however, an essential difference: the English reproach us with timidity in absurd and grotesque things; when the Englishman makes up his mind to be extravagant, he is really so, and recoils before no folly.

cident that most attracted the criticism of the pantomimes in 1860 was the turning-tables.* After all, were not these attacks reprisals? The spirit-rappers, by turning the world topsy-turvy, by making furniture dance, musical instruments play without being touched by the fingers, by sending a shower of flowers down on the spectators, and bearing Mr. Home through the air, offer a challenge to old pantomime. The English theatres had also another reason for owing them a grudge; not satisfied with disturbing the inanimate world, these ambitious spirits wished to enrol William Shakspere in their company. Spiritual journals most seriously published fragments of drama in verse declaimed, or rather rapped, by some table in which the soul of the great bard had sought refuge. I have read these fragments, and of a truth did not recognise in them the author of "Hamlet." It would not be worth while coming back from that bourn from which no traveller returns, if, after having been a great poet in life, a man had nothing better to communicate to poor mortals than such rhapsodies from the tomb.

It is on boxing-night that the new pantomimes make their first appearance at all the English

* The mania for spirit-manifestations was brought into fashion again last year by a remarkable article published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, and by Mr. Home's *soirées*, which the whole of the aristocracy attended. I was myself present at a private meeting; but, as it was a Sunday, the table declared that it was too orthodox a Sabbatarian to work on that day.

theatres. Generally this piece is played after the drama; but some theatres, having a regard for the age of their public, have arranged two performances, the one in the afternoon, the other at night. The day performance is, in my opinion, the most curious. I will not speak of the transition from natural to artificial light, for the London sun is often in December a poor invalid, who claims the assistance of gas in the shops and even in the streets. The most peculiar thing is the audience, and an English poet might call these theatrical representations festivals of maternity. Solemn West-end and City matrons in full dress sit pompously in the boxes amid a group of children, whose heads rise above one another like flower-pots in a hothouse. "Punch" greatly amused himself, a few years ago, at the expense of a society, the model of which exists in America, and which proposes to improve the Anglo-Saxon race by offering prizes to mothers who produce the finest babies. Well, the theatres during the two months that follow Christmas bear a considerable resemblance to this philanthropic institution—the Baby Show. It is an exhibition of children with ruddy cheeks and bare, mottled arms, with the sole difference that there are no official judges, and consequently each mother claims the prize of beauty for her own bantlings.

At times large charity schools arrive led by the patrons of the institution, and take the gal-

lery or pit by storm. Who could describe the joy, the surprise, the simple exclamation of this childish public at the sight of the marvels and splendours of the enchanted world, the valley of diamonds, the land of the fairies? But it is especially at the grand transformation scene that the eyes of the spectators sparkle, hearts leap, and little hands are beaten against each other furiously. How is it possible, in fact, to refrain from falling into ecstasies before these palaces of real water which suddenly spring up into the air with architectural wonders, only possible in the Arabian nights? Add to this Bengal fires of a thousand colours, motionless women arranged like bouquets of artificial flowers on glass globes, while others float on clouds and profusely scatter a shower of gold over an opaline sky. Some Englishmen, however, warmly protest against the idea of pantomimes being suited only for children. If you listen to them, we all possess a corner of the mind and the imagination which remains youthful. It is a fact that I saw at the day performances many serious and aged men, who seemed to take an extreme pleasure in these acted tales of *Peau d'âne.* "What causes the great charm of a pantomime," one of them said to me, "is the recollection of childhood it evokes, and the happy dreams it spread over our slumbers at an age when we slept so soundly. It speaks to us of a time when we still had a father and mother—a time when we

believed in everything, in fairyland, giants, and dwarfs—when we imagined Columbine the loveliest of women, and the clown the happiest of men. In applauding the pantomime, we applaud our own life, or, at least, the better part of it which has passed away. The secret of the duration of our pantomime will be found in the family emotions it renews. Whatever may be said, the Englishman will no more do without his pantomime than he does without his Christmas pudding; for both are, so to speak, golden rings in that chain which is called the memory of the heart."

Although the pantomime especially deals with fancy, it offers another species of interest from the commercial point of view. Without it, many London theatres could not possibly exist. Christmas is called, in the dramatic world, the harvest time, and more than once this harvest has proved fertile in golden sheaves. The success or failure of pantomimes is even regarded in London as a thermometer, by which the state of public prosperity may be estimated. When theatres are doing nothing at that season, nothing is doing anywhere. At the close of 1860 and beginning of 1861, the receipts did not answer the expectations of the managers, who had nearly all hazarded enormous sums on the Christmas entertainments. Several causes were assigned for this—a severe temperature, which kept families by the fireside, charitable gifts that exhausted the purses of the

Londoners, the vast competition of amusements, and the uncertain aspect of affairs in Europe. Some people even fancied they saw in it a sign of the decadence of the pantomime, whose magic wand was broken by the death of the old clowns. The Englishman, in my belief, is too attached to his traditional pleasures, and the Christmas pantomime is too deeply rooted in the habits of the country, for any apprehension to be entertained as to the decline of a theatrical form which possesses at least the advantage of resembling nothing but itself. However serious British society may apparently be, the women and children exert a much greater influence in it than would be supposed at a casual glance. Now, where are the mothers and children who would like to give up an amusement, ever old and yet ever new, which restores to the stage those amiable personages whose place it would be very difficult to fill—the brilliant Harlequin, the turbulent Clown, Pantaloon, his butt, and the graceful Columbine? Pantomime has also another claim to the consideration of the English, it is an important pecuniary affair. Mounting these pieces annually brings into circulation not hundreds but thousands of pounds; and supplies labour for men, women, and children. In order to appreciate more fully the commercial value of the Christmas entertainments, we must take a peep at the pantomime behind the curtain.

The entrance to the stage of most London theatres offers a very melancholy sight; you see stained and bare walls, gloomy passages, and narrow, greasy staircases. You are astonished how the silk dresses and elegant toilettes of the actresses venture into these wretched dens. It is, however, here that from the month of August all the wealth and pomp of the imaginary world are got ready. An author to whom the manager looks for pieces of this description, and who the English call on that account the house author, prepares the subject of the pantomime. It remains for a long time a secret between author and manager, but both set to work. It must not be left out of sight that the pantomime is a commercial affair, especially in the manager's eyes. He must make up for the dead season, and fill up the gaps left in the treasury by tragedy or comedy. Nor, must we feel surprised at learning that the managers make bargains beforehand with London tradespeople to puff their shops or goods. These disguised advertisements, which seem to form more or less a part of the piece, are displayed in a scene prepared for the purpose between clown and pantaloon, who pretend to make fun of the goods. The author for his part writes the opening or literary portion of the harlequinade, while the rest is left to the fancy of the arranger of the pantomime. The machinist, costumiers, and artists, in a word, the whole of the persons connected with the house,

are then convened to hear the piece read, and every one thus learns what his duties will be.

Let us first visit the workshop, where the different articles intended to produce the illusion are elaborated. Here hundreds of masks for which an artist has supplied the designs are moulded by an ingenious process. They are of all shapes and all degrees of ugliness, from the grimace of Quasimodo up to the face of insects monstrously magnified by the help of the microscope. Here, too, the fantastic vegetables, which are to play a part on the stage, grow visibly; here the fairy chairs are produced as if by magic, which are to be converted into pianofortes, as well as the miraculous bed that flies away of its own accord to the ceiling when the clown lies down full length upon it. All this and many other things, which the Englishman calls, in theatrical parlance, properties, employ, as may be supposed, a large number of hands. In the shops you witness the realization of the dreams of the French designer Grandville. I ask myself, too, whether this desire for animating, transforming, and personifying matter, which is certainly one of the features of the English character and a national tendency, has not contributed to the persistent success which fairy pantomimes have obtained in London?

By the side of the workshop, that *atélier* of the marvellous, is generally the wardrobe. At the approach of Christmas the room resembles a hive

of busy bees, *fervet opus.* The milliners are sewing there day and night the dresses of fairies, undines, or nymphs, in gold-spangled muslin; while the costumiers are cutting out the uniforms of the two rival armies, one of which is to fight for the good cause and save the unhappy princess. Some of these fabrics are really valuable, and cost extravagant prices. Not satisfied with attiring the gods, goddesses, genii, and mythological heroes, these costumiers must also steal from Nature the secret of dressing in a tolerable manner the beetles, ladybirds, fireflies, animated flowers, hops, honeysuckles, and all the personifications of the lower world that figure in fairy drama. But the dresses would be nothing without scenery, and it is the artist's pencil that constitutes in London the great success of the pantomimes.

The painting-room is generally situated at the very top of the theatre: it is a long chamber, in which the light is very good, owing to a glass gallery built for the purpose. The canvas intended to receive the design and colouring is often of prodigious size; but it can be easily managed by the help of springs, that raise or lower it at pleasure. I will not describe the processes of this mode of painting, which is, however, very interesting to observe. What struck me most was the astonishing dexterity with which the work progresses, so to speak, visibly. It is true

that a large portion of the work is done by mechanical aids, and an army of brushes assails certain parts of the canvas simultaneously. The artist who presides over this business in the larger theatres is generally a distinguished man, Beverley, Telbin, or Grieve.* The dresses and scenery have need of another auxiliary in the shape of carpentry. In the carpenter's shop the workmen prepare with a mighty noise of saws and hammers the framework, machinery, and accessories which are to give mechanical movement to the pantomime.

Nearly at the same time the rehearsals are begun. The house and the stage then offer, during day, a melancholy contrast with what they will be on the great festival of boxing-night. The house is gloomy, cold, and desolate, and only lit by a sickly light from above. A gas-jet burns over the orchestra, and the boxes, covered with a winding-sheet of calico, seem haunted by ghosts, while awaiting the happy faces that will enliven them a few months later. The curtain is up, but the stage is sad and desolate. A friend and myself formed the audience; and as this friend had an interest in the pantomime, I asked him sundry questions. "Who are those poor creatures," I said to him, "in ragged clothes and

* M. Esquiros has omitted Danby, who has produced at the Surrey some of the chastest effects ever witnessed on an English stage.

worn-out boots, who are being arranged on the rocks of crystal?" "They are," he replied, "the gnomes and sprites of the Fortunate Isle." "And those pretty girls, poorly clad for the season, who are blowing on their fingers over there?" "They are fairies." "And that feeble old man, who is conversing with the manager, with a melancholy look, while enjoying a pinch of snuff?" "That is the young, gay, dashing, and inimitable clown." "And that ballet-girl, in faded fleshings, old satin slippers, that are nearly black, and bonnet, who has tried a *pas*, and is now putting on a brown mantle?" "That is the Columbine." I could not suppress a start of surprise. "Columbine?" I exclaimed. "Herself. You now see her in her work-a-day clothes: at the first performance you will see her in all her glory, first as the Princess, on whom the evil spirits have cast a spell, and then as the transfigured being who at once recovers the brilliancy, power, and freshness of her charms. She will create a tremendous sensation." From this conversation both my friend and myself concluded that it did not do to see the seamy side of illusions or the rehearsals of a pantomime.

The characters in these English pieces deserve some notice. For a long time the principal part was that of Harlequin, and the famous Rich is said to have been in turn gay, graceful, and pathetic. At the present day this character has

lost much of its importance. The modern Harlequin is merely a great boy on the stage, whose principal merit consists in twirling like a gold leaf in the wind, or leaping from the stage up to a high window, behind which a mattress is spread out to catch him. This change, if I may believe the antiquaries of the English stage, is due to the influence of the great clown Grimaldi. His extraordinary performance placed in the background, and almost entirely obliterated, the hero of the old pantomime. Things have remained at the point where Grimaldi left them; but the English complain bitterly that they have no good clowns left. Two of the most celebrated, Arthur Nelson and Richard Flexmore, after being the delight of the public for years, and, to use an Englishman's expression, the most wonderful playthings that could be offered to children at the season for making presents, very recently joined in the inevitable dance of death, although still young.

As a general rule clowns do not live long; the Herculean labours they perform on the stage render them prematurely old, and expose them to all sorts of diseases. The youngest and most powerful often fall exhausted at the end of the performance. One of them said to me with a bitter smile, as he wiped away the perspiration that poured down his forehead, "You see that we work hard to amuse the public." I could not, indeed,

refrain from painful reflections at the sufferings of men who cause laughter. A short time ago the clown at the Yarmouth theatre was proceeding to the dressing-room to change his clothes when he suddenly complained of indisposition, and lay down not to rise again. He had been long suffering from a chest complaint, the sad fruit of his laborious efforts, and, though in a dying state, had never amused the audience so much as on that night.

Another very important branch of the English pantomime is the ballet, for no Christmas entertainment is possible without dances, processions, and *tableaux vivants*. For all this women are necessary, and hence each theatre engages at this season a band of dancers or *figurantes*, known by the name of ballet-girls. The latter, I am bound to say, make great complaints about their social position; they openly accuse the theatres of taking every advantage of them, and their principal grievance is that they are compelled to attend rehearsals for three or four weeks without payment. During the choregraphic movements of the rehearsal I was enabled to overhear some of their habitual complaints: "What a profession," one of them, a pretty, young, fair-haired girl exclaimed, "to act Cupid for two shillings a night, and be obliged to find our own wings in the bargain!" Another, who came a long distance to attend rehearsals, suggested payment for shoes worn out in doing so. "If in real life," she added, "we could walk on clouds, I

should not have a word to say, but my shoes know too well that we only walk on clouds at the theatre, and frequently at the risk of breaking our necks." What most excited the acrimony of the ballet was the absence of refreshments, whose want was felt after fatiguing dances. "On my word," one of them, who seemed the most angry, said, "the manager really takes us for fairies, and believes that we ought to live on air." "Thanks for the compliment," one of her companions answered, "but I should prefer a pint of ale." These and some other remarks taught me that the world of enchantments also had its miseries. Regarded from the tradesmanlike point of view, the legitimacy of these complaints is, at the least, contestible. Theatres, like other commercial enterprises, are in the condition of all trade establishments which have to get the most work at the cheapest rate possible. Now, although the ballet-girls are so poorly paid, there is any quantity of competition lurking at the stage-door. The managers also invite attention to the fact that they only occupy a portion of the ballet-girls' time, and that a salary of fifteen or twenty shillings a week is very respectable when compared with the ordinary scale of payment for women's work. All these reasons are assuredly very good, and yet they do not prevent the ballet-girls forming a really suffering class. All goes on well enough so long as the pantomime lasts; but the Christmas holidays do

not endure all the year, and the time when the ballet-girls feel most in want is when the bad days of summer arrive after dancing all the winter. One of them, nineteen years of age, last year, placed her infant out at nurse in the country with a very poor woman. At first the ballet-girl paid the nurse regularly, but, her engagement having ceased about Easter, she sent no more money. The child literally died of starvation through the neglect of the nurse, who had recourse to the workhouse when too late. The judge had not the courage to condemn the mother, for she could not give milk to her babe when she had not bread for herself.

The ballet-girls have also a bad reputation, but do they deserve it? That is a delicate question, which I shall not attempt to solve. Among the women who present themselves at the London theatres to personify the Venuses of all the mythologies, we can easily suppose that the managers do not choose the ugliest, and the English pantomime owes a portion of its success to the fine hair, large blue eyes, and attractive forms displayed on the stage at that period. Does not beauty, allied with a life of seduction and wretchedness, constitute for these poor girls what all moralists regard as the danger of a false step? All I can say is that there are splendid exceptions among them. A few years back, a ballet-girl lived in London who was regarded as a model of all the virtues which the English honour before all in a

CHAPTER VII.

ENGLISH COMEDY—VOLTAIRE AND LORD CHESTERFIELD—THE STAGE IRISHMAN—THE SCOTCHMAN—THE BRITISH SAILOR—MR. WIDDICOMB—MR. COYNE'S BLACK SHEEP—MR. ALFRED WIGAN—CHARLES MATHEWS—BURLESQUE—THE STRAND THEATRE—MR. WILLIAM BROUGH—ANECDOTE OF SHERIDAN.

THERE exists a new type of comedy which belongs exclusively to the English. I have specially in view that for which Ben Jonson supplied the model—solid, massive, compact, well fitted to resist time, and less rich in wit than fertile in powerful situations, well designed characters, and sentiments that elevate human nature. At the present day, however, this classic comedy is almost abandoned. The only thing that has succeeded it, and which still bears a national stamp, is the comedy of the fireside. This word is more correct than may be supposed, for I have never seen an English comedy in which there was not a fireplace with a crackling coal-fire. The English have such a love of home, that they readily idealise the slightest details of English life. In this chapter I shall leave the literary point of view out of sight; for what I seek before all, on the British stage, is a portraiture

of society. The stage certainly represents here, as elsewhere, the thermometer of public opinion, and the mirror of manners; but I am forced to confess that in some respects my hopes were partially deceived. Various obstacles prevent comedy being the reflex of English life in England, and the first of these is adaptation. We have seen what a contingent the translation of French melodramas supplied to the London theatres, and I believe that the comic *genre* is even more exposed to the pilfering of adapters. Of ten comedies there are at least nine in which the cloven foot may be discovered; that is to say, traces of an illicit origin, in spite of various more or less skilful disguises.

A story is told in England how Voltaire, during his residence in London, was one day in an aristocratic drawing-room, where Lord Chesterfield was also present. A lady, whose face was covered with rouge and *blanc de ceruse*, tried to keep up the conversation with the celebrated stranger, who had the reputation of being a wit. Chesterfield, tapping Voltaire on the shoulder, said to him, "Take care you are not captivated." "My lord," the author of the "Henriade" answered, "I will never let myself be seduced by an English foundation under French colours." I should be disposed to say the same of the translated or adapted comedies, with this difference, that here the foundation is French and the colours are English. The inconveniences of this system can easily be seen: it

tends to introduce on the stage the representation of a world whose absurdities, vices, and habits in no way harmonise with English society. I will only quote one instance. Duels are almost unknown in England, where they are ranked with murder, and yet they are tolerated on the stage for the sole reason that challenges and affairs of honour play a great part in our French pieces. An English dramatic author also drew my attention, with a good deal of sense, to the fact that the imitation of foreign plays had even altered the style of the scenery. In order to facilitate entrances and exits, we represent our apartments with several doors communicating with other rooms, and which do not differ very greatly from our way of building houses; but such an arrangement never existed in England, where the houses are built upon a perfectly different model. The action of the comedy thus takes place in England amid scenery entirely foreign to the manners of the country.

Truth has also another enemy on the London boards, in the shape of the traditions attaching to certain characters. A fact will explain my idea better. A stereotyped Irishman exists on the English stage, much in the same way as the Gascon used to do in the French theatres. Conforming to this type, and even exaggerating it so that it might depart more and more from nature and truth, seems to have been the determination of all the comic authors who succeeded each other

for the last two centuries. Such a person doubtless emanated originally from the prejudices of the Saxon race against the sons of the Celtic race. A buffoon was required and Pat was chosen. No farce can be good without an Irishman in it, and the latter is nearly always a grotesque, impudent, ignorant, cunning fellow, and a fortune-hunter; a singular mixture, in short, of simplicity and craft, stupidity and natural wit. The Irishman is not only a character, but also a profession on the stage. Some actors devote themselves almost exclusively to this speciality. One of the most celebrated Irishmen, a few years back, was Power, who acquired both reputation and money. Not satisfied with modelling and remodelling (if I may use the expression) all the Irishmen after the same conventional pattern, the English stage also gives them a fanciful accent and language which may be met with everywhere except in Ireland. Coleman was once in Dublin, when his comedy "The Jealous Wife" was performed. Some one asked him how he liked the performance. "Upon my honour," he answered, "I did not exactly understand what the actors said, for they all spoke a species of *patois*, with the exception of the one who acted Captain O'Cutter, whose accent and pronunciation are most purely English." It was difficult to make a more bitter criticism of the company, for this Captain O'Cutter, who was the only Irishman in the piece, ought, according to the theatrical

tradition, to have been distinguished from the rest by his bad jargon. I will not say that Coleman was entirely in the wrong, or that Irishmen cannot recognise each other by their accent, but it is a different thing to hear them conversing, and listening to them when performing on the stage.

It is not merely from the artistic point of view that this mis-representation of the Irish character is disagreeable: from the social aspect, it affords weapons to the protests of a race, which thus acquires the right to call itself ill-treated. Many of the political grievances on which the dissatisfaction of the Irish is based are, in my opinion, imaginary; and it is not in the world of facts, so much as in that of fiction that injustice is dealt them. Still, as fiction often exerts as much influence as reality upon men's minds, English comedy, I fear, has been no stranger to the deplorable animosities that divide the two families, or two shades of the population. A happy reaction against the old theatrical customs, took place in this respect in the "Colleen Bawn." This drama was played at Dublin by an Irish actor, and to an Irish audience, which at last recognized itself with pleasure in a mirror which had nothing offensive or exaggerated about it.

The sons of the sister-isle are not the only ones who have a right to complain of the unfaithfulness of the English stage. It is rare to see on the boards a Scotchman without a kilt and shaggy red

hair: Doctor Johnson himself, in spite of his obstinate prejudices against the inhabitants of old Caledonia, would, however, allow, were he still living, that the portrait is not always exact. People comb their hair in Scotland as they do elsewhere, and as for the kilt, it is at the present day a sort of theatrical costume only worn on some highland mountains, and here and there through fancy, but very rarely, in the great towns. A Scotchman in the national costume produces as great a sensation in the streets of Edinburgh, as he does in those of London.

Through a contrary, though equally conventional process, the comic authors have greatly flattered the character of the British Tar, Old Jack. The reason for this partiality may be easily detected: the navy constitutes the most solid rampart of England, and is the right arm of the national defence; hence dramatic literature considers that it does a patriotic act and at the same time obtains the favour of John Bull, by always presenting to him the sunny side of a seaman's life. I have certainly nothing to say against British sailors: brave men, who daily wrestle for existence with the tempests, and plant the flag of their country on every coast of the known world, are naturally good-hearted men. I could quote more than one instance of generosity which does them honour, were it necessary: I have seen them assist women and children in distress, the only recom-

pense they asked being that they should be thought of, when the wind howled and the lightning rent the black sky. All I regret is that they should have been given a sort of stereotyped character on the English stage. A man who has seen one old theatrical sailor has seen them all. It is always same blue jacket, the same white trousers, the same straw or oil-skin hat, there are the same dances, and the same sonorous tirades about the maritime supremacy of Old England. In London, these declamations are innocent enough, and may be even useful in reanimating national feeling: but, in some garrison towns, where soldiers and sailors are congregated together, the preference shown the latter on the stage frequently leads to the most desperate and violent fights. I witnessed, some years ago, one of these conflicts between the blue jackets and the red coats at the little Chatham theatre. It was a tempest, a battle of fists, which on this occasion terminated in the defeat of the "lobsters."

Among the comedies now being played at the London theatres, we may, however, find certain types of a nature to give us an idea of English society. One of the characters which has recently proved successful is that of the hypocrite—not Molière's Tartuffe, but a sort of English Tartuffe—who is not at all known in France, at any rate not under the same colours. Heaven guard me from saying that hypocrisy is more widely spread in Great Britain than on the Continent! at the first

blush, we might be tempted to believe that the liberty of the institutions has stifled this ignoble vice: but it is fair to add that in a country where, in want of legal restraint, public opinion rules the morals, habits and prejudices with a sceptre of iron, there is ample space left for the spirit of dissimulation. At the Princess's I saw a piece called "Bowled Out," in which Mr. H. Widdicomb, a comic actor of considerable talent, played very naturally the character of a preacher and distributor of tracts. In order to understand the extent of the abuse, which the author (Mr. Craven) and the actor wished to attack, my readers must know that in England among certain sects of the dissenters, every man is a Priest, in the sense that each member can take on himself the mission of sowing the word of God. On Sundays, and even week days, you find in the parks and the public squares open air preachers who are more or less successful in obtaining a congregation. When I arrived in England, some years ago now, I even saw in Wapping a negro haranguing a circle of people who had stopped through curiosity. As I had never seen anything like this in any other countries—except, perhaps, in France during the stormiest days of 1848—I asked myself whether the police would interfere to silence the orator who attracted a crowd and, I must add, a very noisy crowd. A policeman on duty certainly came up to the mob: but, to my great surprise, it was

for the purpose of protecting the black preacher from the insults and rather sharp jokes to which he was exposed.

Other lay preachers slip into the chapels and even under the domestic roof, where they enjoy a degree of consideration that is not always deserved. There are even Englishmen holding a certain position in Society, who favour this preaching, and who devote a part of their fortune to printing small religious books, which they distribute in the streets. The latter are, at any rate, sincere, and though opinions may differ as to the use they make of their means of influence, they cannot be taxed with hypocrisy: but by the side of them are others who work in the same direction with more or less interested views. These are the men the English stage wished to unmask and brand, thus claiming the privilege of punishing by ridicule a vice against which the pulpit too rarely protests. These wolves in sheep's clothing are, moreover, distinguished in England by external features, a white tie, a black coat, a face got up according to a peculiar type of asceticism, features that form a contrast with the ordinary immobility of the English, and above all a false nasal tone which preaches even in conversation.

The Haymarket lately presented us the same view under another mask. In a piece entitled the "Black Sheep," by Mr. Stirling Coyne, a rather skilful painter of English manners and absurdities

on the stage, Buckstone, the great comic actor, portrays the philanthropic hypocrite. It is a character, I allow, which may easily exist elsewhere, but it is attached in a special manner to the habits of British charity. It is rare for an Englishman to give alms in the street: but hand him a subscription list, and his heart opens as readily as his purse does. It will, perhaps, be said that it is the pride and pleasure of seeing his name in print that induces him to act in so honourable a manner. I cannot, however, accept this interpretation, for the lists intended to succour some charities are covered with anonymous gifts, often amounting to large sums. Is it not more natural to account for this formalism in charity by the English character, which likes everything to be done by rule, and hates nothing so much as being cheated? On the other hand, as the distribution of assistance is not, as in France, in the hands of the State, and charity is based on an entirely private mechanism, it has created certain intermediate agents in England. These persons generally merit the confidence placed in them, but there is no flock into which black sheep do not slip at times.

The "Black Sheep," whom the Haymarket stigmatises by holding him up to public laughter, is one of these false apostles: under the colour of religion and humanity, he has contrived to take care of his own interests rather than those of the poor. He traverses with groans this vale of tears, but sips the

dew of the good deeds; and while distributing watery soup, himself lives on the fat of the land. In these two comedies ("Bowled out" and "Black Sheep"), the denouement is the same, and the hypocrite is paid in his own coin. The coarse materialism he tried to cover by the gown of devotion and the cloak of charity, does not resist the attractions of liquor, and wine brings the truth out of the well.

There is another type which deserves study, and that is the Englishman who has spent his life in India. At the St. James's last season, Mr. Alfred Wigan, an actor who excels in expression, marvellously represented one of these Bengal tigers. The tropical sun has dried up his heart, wrinkled his forehead, whitened his hair, and jarred his nerves; harsh, egotistic, absolute, and irritable, he still believes himself in the heart of the desert, surrounded by enemies. He demands passive obedience, is served like a nabob, finds that the English climate has grown horribly cold during the last five and twenty years, and only sees in his nephews and nieces strangers who covet his fortune. By degrees, however, the gentle sun of family life warms his chilled heart; the reflections of an old man-servant who, at the sight of a portrait, compares what his young master formerly was with the old, imperious, morose, and egotistic man, on whom the Indian climate has engraved the manners of a domestic tyrant, open the eyes

of the veteran, and make him discover the sad change his character has undergone. The rough bark bursts, and the Englishman becomes himself again.

The Divorce Bill, on the other hand, if we may believe certain symptoms, has originated a trade which the legislators certainly did not foresee; it is that of the trafficker in divorces. At the St. James's, Mr. Wigan's brother introduced into a neat comedy, "Law for the Women," one of those dangerous persons who try to disturb the peace of households, or at least profit by domestic storms. The young couple we see on the stage are temporarily divided by one of those clouds of jealousy which pass too often across the honeymoon. The agent steps into the house like the serpent into Paradise, and whispers into the lady's ear the obscure language of the law. "We want a good divorce," he says, "but in order to obtain it, we require proofs of violence or brutality. Make him box your ears." Unluckily it is not the wife who receives the box on the ears, for she gives it to her husband in a moment of impatience and jealousy. At the sound produced by this little hand on the husband's cheek, the agent, who has been listening in an adjoining room, makes his appearance, declares himself a witness, and pronounces a few legal phrases as to the rights of the weak and oppressed sex. His intrigues, however, prove powerless, and the blow leads, on the contrary, to

an explanation between the young couple, and a perfect reconciliation. All that is left the divorcer (if I may be allowed to coin a new name for a new trade) is to offer his services on a future occasion.

The comedies imitated from the French nation only teach us but little about English manners. Still it would be curious to follow the changes which opinion imposes in Great Britain on our dramatic literature, in order that it may be accepted by an English audience. We can form an idea of the modifications French pieces must necessarily undergo in a country where unmarried girls enjoy very considerable independence, while married women submit themselves strictly, and with a sort of Roman pride, to the chain of their duties.

The English enjoy on the Continent a reputation for melancholy, which does not appear to me to be justified. Doubtless their humour has been confounded with the colour of their sky, which is, in truth, very gray during a portion of the year, but which, for all that, does not engender spleen. Most of their old comedies are merry. They have never been able to endure tragedy, which they consider too dry, and even in their gloomiest dramas they blend the risible with the serious, so that each may relieve the other. In private they like from time to time a bit of fun. It is not the less true that their laughter differs uncommonly from ours. English gaiety is that of a grave people, who, for all that, are only the more jolly

in their moments of fun; it is what they call humour, with its sudden and unexpected sallies, daring metaphors, and a foundation of biting eccentricity, which is most frequently concealed under a cold and staid air. The comic actors have naturally been obliged to conform to this type of the national joviality, and some of them are certainly most amusing. They generally have, however, on the stage a certain stiffness, whose cause can be easily detected. The English, owing to that spirit of self-command, which is the guide of their character, have almost entirely suppressed gesticulation in conversation. This restraint, so opposed to ours, is so entirely a feature of the race, that in Regent Street I can at once distinguish a Frenchman. I need only look at the working of his arms. The English actors, not finding around them or in themselves that gesticulation, which on the stage gives life to conversation, are obliged to acquire it. I know some actors who have travelled in France and Italy expressly for this purpose; others satisfy themselves with studying it at the theatre; but in either case it is difficult for imitation to have the ease and suppleness of nature. There are certainly some English actors who have instinctively divined this branch of the mimic art; but they are rare, and only serve to bring out in stronger relief the deficiencies of their comrades.

One of their greatest merits, if I may judge from what I have seen, and especially from the traditions

of the British stage, is the play of the features, and the gift of transforming body and soul into another person. It is said that Hogarth and Garrick sitting together one day in a London tavern, expressed their regret at not possessing a portrait of Fielding. "I think," said Garrick, "that I could imitate his face," and he at once began producing his old friend. "David," Hogarth exclaimed, "for Heaven's sake do not stir, stay as you are for a few minutes," and the artist, taking up his pencil, drew the sketch of the only portrait of Fielding—the one found in most editions of "Tom Jones." This faculty of transforming himself was so remarkable, that on more than one occasion Mrs. Garrick was unable to recognise her husband on the stage. Garrick's dog alone could not be deceived by any disguise, and showed by an eager glance in the box that its master was on the stage. I have also been told of another English actor who invented several comic ways of twisting his nose, each of which drew a laugh from the spectators.

Among the living actors who sustain English comedy at a respectable elevation, the most distinguished are, in addition to Buckstone and Robson, to whom I have already alluded, Charles Mathews, Toole (who ought to be seen in "Bob Rackett," and the "Distracted Manager"), Compton, Rogers, Leigh Murray, David Fisher, and Paul Bedford, who is now but half himself; the other half was Wright, a first rate comic actor, who

nearly always performed with him, but who died two or three years ago. I will, however, only dwell on Charles Mathews, who, in himself, is sufficient to give an idea of an English comedian.

Charles Mathews is the son of an actor of the same name, who had a prodigious talent for counterfeiting the voice of different persons, and a multitude of stories are told about him. One dark December night, such as, perhaps, can only be found in England, the celebrated actor was seated all alone, and much against his will, on the top of a coach running from Exeter to Plymouth. The stage had scarce started ere a cold piercing rain began falling. Mathews, who had neither great coat nor umbrella, therefore resolved to have recourse to his talents of mimicry in order to obtain a seat inside. At first he pretended to nurse and fondle in his arms a child, whose piercing cries at length reached the ears of the sheltered travellers in spite of the noise of the wheels. Among them were two women, one a mother, the other on the point of becoming so. "Good gracious!" they exclaimed, "an infant in such weather on the outside of the coach." One of them let down a window, and thrusting her head out into the cold damp night said, "My good woman, hand me your child." "No, no," Mathews answered, imitating the voice and pronunciation of a Frenchwoman, "my little Adolphine will not leave her mamma." After which a chorus began between the mother,

who was trying to pacify her child, and the baby, which cried more lustily than before. As the cordial alliance between England and France did not exist at that time, the English women did not fail to be indignant at this barbarity on the part of an unnatural mother, who was so selfish as to risk the life of her infant. The French revolution, which had perverted human nature in that country, was even accused of being the cause of this hardness of heart. The ladies, however, not letting themselves be disarmed by the resistance of the bad mother, cried to the driver to stop, but he refused point blank, saying that he was himself wet to the skin, and required all his wits not to lose his road on such a night. Then a furious dialogue began between the travellers and the female, supposed to be sitting outside, till the latter threatened to throw the infant into the road if it was not quiet. Presently the ladies fancied they heard the noise of something falling, then a cry, and all was over. The horror was intense. When the coach stopped at an inn, Mathews got down quickly from the roof, and slipped into the kitchen to dry himself at the fire. The Frenchwoman was looked for everywhere, and men even started with lighted lanthorns to pick up the child that was supposed to be lying in a road-side ditch. A magistrate was fetched to inquire into the affair, but Mathews told him that the woman had disappeared, and that he alone was responsible. This amazing actor,

during the latter part of his life, gave performances in which he occupied the stage alone, and amused the public for an entire evening by imitating a number of characters and assuming all sorts of faces.

His son, Charles Mathews, though he has not inherited the same gifts, is a comic actor of rare talent. As he was destined for an architect, he travelled when quite young on the continent, where he learned several languages and frequented the best society. But it was not for nothing that he had a comedian's blood in his veins, and at the age of eighteen he appeared at the English Opera House for the benefit of a friend. This actor has passed his whole life in what the English call "hot water," that is to say, that after making several fortunes, he knocked them down one after the other, that since that time he has been the prey of money-lenders and lawyers, that he has passed through several Courts to arrange or derange his affairs, and that he waged for years a Homeric contest against the bailiffs. On one occasion when they were waiting behind the scenes to arrest him at the close of the performance, he stepped into the orchestra, crossed the house wrapped up in a cloak, and joined the crowd, which was then leaving the theatre. A friend one day advised him to engage a man to restore some order in his finances. "I did so," he replied, "I engaged one of the best accountants in the city, and the result

was that at the end of two months I was a thousand pounds worse off than before; the scoundrel boasted afterwards that he robbed me without my perceiving it." Charles Mathews has been twice married; first in 1838, to Madame Vestris, and secondly in America, to Mrs. Davenport, the wife of an English actor of some merit, from whom she was divorced. In spite of his extravagance, Charles Mathews is a man generally liked, even by his creditors, who willingly let him off, it is said, owing to his wit and good humour.

As a comic actor his style is truly *sui generis*. Nothing on the English stage resembles the volubility of his tongue, the activity of his performance, which does not weary the spectator for a moment, and the ease and familiarity of his manner, which is always that of a gentleman. Up to this point Charles Mathews differs from most of the comedians of his country, and would be nearer the French school. We may suspect that Madame Vestris had something to say in the direction of his theatrical studies. By the side of this he admirably personifies what the English term "cool as a cucumber." A true type of the pleasant Englishman, he makes others laugh without ever laughing himself. This impenetrable phlegm; this cold assurance which does not bear the slightest resemblance to French effrontery; this persevering coolness which is never false to itself, and is checked by no difficulty; are so many

traits at once characteristic of the actor and of the Anglo-Saxon race. Like several of his comrades, Charles Mathews writes, or, at least, adapts, for himself some of the pieces in which he plays the principal part.

In addition to comedy, the English possess another style, which has recently created a sensation on the stage, through which the little Strand theatre has acquired an incontestable reputation, and which has received the name of burlesque. This form of piece is the comedy of allusions, and turns on the absurdities of the hour—at times even on improbable or exceptional characters in society. I confess that I have not an intense liking for this style of farce, but I can understand how, in the absence of dramas or comedies possessing a literary value, burlesque, supported by music, dancing, clever actors, splendid scenery, buffoon parodies, and all sorts of eccentricities, should have seduced for a time the London public. Another sort of piece, which in my opinion is more closely akin with art, is what the English call an extravaganza. Mr. W. Brough, a talented young dramatic author, has gained considerable reputation in this branch, and the title of one of his extravaganzas—"Endymion; or, the Naughty Boy that cried for the Moon," will furnish an idea of the nature of such pieces.

As I wish to seek the peculiarities of the English Stage, I must not omit the performances in which

the interest attaches to actors of the canine race principally. At Drury Lane, in Sheridan's time, a play called the "Caravan," and written by Reynolds, was brought out, in which a Newfoundland dog called Carlo, leapt from a considerable height into a piece of natural water expressly arranged for the occasion: the dog was supposed to save a drowning child. At the end of the first representation Sheridan went into the green room, and every body supposed that he was going to congratulate the author. "Where is he?" Sheridan asked. "He has just gone out," the prompter answered. "Who?" "The author." "Stuff! I mean the dog—author, actor, and saviour of Drury Lane." At the present day, however, the intervention of dogs is restricted to the minor London theatres..

These model dogs protect the weak and oppressed, watch over their master's corpse, and defend on the stage with thorough national ardour, the flag of Old England. I would willingly point them out as deserving of the *Prix Monthyon*, were it ever established among our neighbours. The player with dogs constitutes a curious speciality in his profession. He alone, as may be easily understood, can obtain on the stage the assistance of these dramatic allies, whose instincts are, so to speak, suspended on the movements of his eyes. He most frequently leads a wandering life, for this sort of piece has but a short run at a

theatre, and the performing dogs resemble, in this respect, the stars of the new system, which we have seen introduced by great actors and actresses. He goes from town to town with his company, meeting with many adventures, and at times with bitter disappointments. One of the too frequent calamities that afflict him most is the death of one of his "partners;" for the education of his dramatic pupils requires considerable care and pains. "Sooner than have lost Fido," one of them exclaimed, with a sorrowful accent, "I would have lost all my wardrobe, and forgotten all my parts." This was saying a good deal, for his parts and his wardrobe were all he possessed in the world.

Does not the life of actors generally in Great Britain offer some interesting features? We shall see that by studying English comedians in their relations with the world and the theatre.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHURCH AND THE THEATRES—POSITIONS OF ACTORS—M RIAGES OF ACTRESSES—A CURIOUS INCIDENT — MIG TIONS OF ACTORS — THE ERA NEWSPAPER — THEATRI FUNDS — THE DRAMATIC COLLEGE — THE THEATRICAL P FESSION : ITS VIRTUES AND DEFECTS.

ONE fact strikes me when I compare the soc condition of actors in England, with that which th occupy in the Catholic States of the Continent. notice among our neighbours that the theatrical pr fession is not excommunicated by the Church. first sight this difference will perhaps appear seco dary; but it will not be so if we reflect upon t influence the religious order everywhere exe over the civil order. Who would dare affi even in the nineteenth century—even after V taire and Rousseau—that the manners, prejudic and customs of the French are unaffected by th old creed? Well, not only do English comedia not find themselves in any way placed without t pale of the Protestant Church, but they are al generally kindly regarded by the enlighten portion of the national clergy. An English the logian drew my attention to the fact, that St. Pa

himself did not fear to quote before the Areopagus, a verse from the old Greek tragedians, thus rendering homage to the civilising action of the stage. Who cannot see the value of this argument in a country where the Bible is authoritative? Last year, a member of the Anglican Church, the Rev. J. C. Young, presided at the meeting held to celebrate Shakspere's birthday. The bust of the great dramatist and actor is also put up in the church of his native town, Stratford-on-Avon. Another clergyman, the Rev. Sidney Smith, while alluding to the pretended dangers of the theatre, laughingly asked whether it was a good hygienic system never to take the air through fear of catching cold? Several great actors, such as John Kemble, reckoned intimate friends among the ministers of the Protestant Church. Charles Young lived with the Bishop of Bath and Wells almost as a member of his family. At the present day, in the provinces, the heads of the cathedrals do not believe that they injure their ecclesiastical dignity by being present at theatrical representations, with a species of official character. On more than one occasion, the stage, for its part, has offered its alms and assistance to the Anglican Clergy, who have never refused them. A dramatic performance given at Drury Lane, laid the foundation of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. It was also an actor who founded Dulwich College—a truly religious

work, if the law and the prophets consist, as we are taught, in loving our neighbour as ourself.

It is, however, very true, that the pulpit has from time to time denounced the pernicious tendencies of the new dramatic school; but often the clergy, in acting thus, employed a right that belongs to every critic and every moralist. We may even say that they displayed a solicitude for a branch of art which they sought to elevate, not to proscribe. The theatrical profession possesses, besides, a buckler which, were it necessary, would protect it against unjust attacks. We must not leave out of sight the fact that, in Great Britain, the Queen is the head of the spiritual power; and the Queen, very rightly so, protects the actors. The State, as we have seen, gives no subvention to the theatres; but the Head of the State shows her predilection for certain actors or pieces, by frequenting the theatres that seem to her worthy of interest. It has even been noticed that the Queen in this matter did not look at the importance of the house. Her presence exerts a considerable influence upon the success of the company, and on more than one account is almost equivalent to a subvention. How many English ladies I have heard say, for instance, that the "Colleen Bawn" must be a fine play, as the Queen had gone to see it thrice at the Adelphi. There is also a private theatre at Windsor Castle, where

the best London actors and actresses go in turn to perform before the Court.

Still, I cannot assert that the stage in England has no opposition to endure from certain religious ideas. In English Protestantism two very marked tendencies may be distinguished, the one national, and the other which may be referred to the Doctors of Geneva. The old rivalries of the Cavaliers and Roundheads, of the High and Low Church, are not extinct, or anything like extinct, in the country of Cromwell. The old leaven of Puritanism seems to me especially to have sought refuge, as regards the theatres, in the sects of the Methodists, who are certainly strict and respectable men, but short-sighted and tenacious in their prejudices. One of the fiercest diatribes against the dramatic art was lately uttered by Mr. Spurgeon, who belongs to that branch of the Dissenters known by the name of Baptists. As Mr. Spurgeon is an eloquent preacher, but borrows several of his effects from theatrical action, it has been asked whether a little professional jealousy were not mixed up in his attacks?

A new fact, however, appears to me of a nature to reconcile the old enmities between the pulpit and the stage. For some years past the custom has been spreading of letting the theatres on Sundays to clergymen. Who protested against this innovation? was it the religious sects? certainly not: the opposition was raised most frequently by

actors, who, doubtless irritated by old recollections, asked by what right the ministers of the Gospel came to invade the domain of the stage. "Was it proper," they exclaimed, "for the sons of the old Puritans to instal themselves in places their fathers had denounced as dens of infamy?" As the managers found a material advantage in not shutting up the theatres on the seventh day, most of them have willingly come into the system. At the present day, a very considerable number of theatres are converted into churches on Sundays, morning and evening. Passing, a little while back, the City Theatre in Shoreditch, two bills attracted every eye; one was the bill of the week's performances, the other, that of a religious service which was being held at the moment.

I know a Frenchman who, passing through London and finding the Sunday very wearisome, went about the streets in search of some place of amusement, when to his great surprise he saw a theatre open. He stepped in, full of hope; but, as he did not understand a word of English, he formed a somewhat vague idea of the performance he was witnessing. His conclusion on coming out was, that there was too little scenery, and that the sadness of a London Sunday doubtless extended to the theatres on that day. In spite of the objections that may be urged against the blending of the sacred and the profane, I am inclined to regard the services at the

theatres as a happy innovation. Does not the stage thus become a neutral ground on which two parties are brought together, one of which formerly destroyed the playhouses in England? Must not the hospitality the theatre now grants the religious sects teach them that it is bad policy to burn down the house of a neighbour, or even an enemy, for some day or another they may want it themselves?

Last year, a comedy called "The World and the Stage," was represented at the Haymarket, and obtained, in spite of several touching situations, but slight success. The reason for this could be easily discovered; the piece being a plea against unjust opinions with respect to actors and actresses, was based, thank Heaven, on an anachronism. There was a time, I allow, when actors and actresses were not admitted into good society in England. Macklin, going one day into a fire insurance office, answered the clerk, who asked his name, "I am only Charles Macklin, a vagabond by Act of Parliament; but as a compliment of the day, you can write Charles Macklin, Esq., for they are two synonymous terms." At the present day this sally would have no point, because actors are no longer subjected to any surveillance or legal restriction. I am bound also to say, that in defiance of the Act of Parliament to which Macklin alluded, several comedians of the last century lived on a familiar footing with the

English aristocracy. Quin, for instance, waged a merry war of epigrams with the noblemen of his time. One day, this actor, who was very corpulent, met in Bath Lord Chesterfield, who asked him where he came from. "I have just come," Quin answered, "from dining at the Three Tuns." The Earl remarked, "There are only two since you have left the house." This time it was the actor who was beaten, but he took his revenge on another occasion. Dining in the same city with several men of fashion, he made a joke in the course of conversation that was most successful. A nobleman who was in the company exclaimed, "What a misfortune for a man of wit like you to be a comedian!" "Would you prefer my being a lord?" the actor replied, turning red with passion and drawing himself to his full height. At the present day actors feel no bitterness against lords, or the rather vague title of esquire, for they all consider themselves gentlemen.

The progress of education and of institutions has most assuredly thrown down in great measure the old barriers that rose between society and the theatrical profession; but can we say that all prejudices have vanished in consequence? I can scarce venture to affirm it, for I know that some two years ago, a schoolmaster refused to take the son of an eminent actor into his school. This was perhaps a case in which we may repeat with Alfred de Musset, "as ignorant as a school-

master;" for there are many other facts which proclaim a change in manners. It will be sufficient to refer to the grand dinner given to Charles Kean by his friends at St. James's Hall, at which six hundred and fifty of the nobility and gentry were present. The chair was occupied by the Duke of Newcastle. There were seven hundred ladies in the galleries, and Mrs. Charles Kean, on entering the banqueting-room, was greeted with enthusiastic applause. It may be possibly objected that, through his education and success, Mr. Charles Kean forms an exception in the dramatic career; but is it not the case in all the liberal professions, that only men of exceptional talent mingle with the aristocracy? On the other hand, an M. P. who got into trouble a few years ago, and resigned his seat, did not hesitate to appear on the boards of several theatres in order to pay his debts.

The change in English manners will be found even more remarkable, if we turn our attention to the life of actresses. Formerly, marriage was almost interdicted to them. One of the first women who appeared after the Restoration on the British stage, was seduced by Aubrey de Vere, last Earl of Oxford, who deluded her by a secret marriage. She soon discovered that this marriage was false, that the priest had been an impostor, and the witnesses servants in his lordship's service. In vain did this deceived Roxana (it was

the part she played in Davenant's "Siege of Rhodes") demand protection from the Legislature —in vain did she throw herself at the King's knees to ask for justice. The marriage of a nobleman with an actress was so contrary to the received notions of the age, that she obtained no reparation. I will also add, with regret, that the seducer died, covered with honours, and was interred in Westminster Abbey. At a later date, another actress, Mrs. Oldfield, in spite of her beauty, wisdom, and talent, could not succeed in getting either of the only two men she was attached to in her life, to marry her. One of them was Mainwaring, a celebrated Whig writer, to whom a volume of the "Spectator" was dedicated; the other, General Churchill. Her equivocal position, however, had something so interesting about it, and Mrs. Oldfield so properly observed the duties of marriage without being married, that she was received in the best society, and even at Court. One of the first noblemen who had the courage to break through the prejudice was Lord Peterboro'; he married in 1735 an actress, Anastasia Robinson. From this time the marriages of men of fashion with actresses became more frequent, although they still met with considerable opposition from English society. The father of the celebrated George Canning, having taken to wife Miss Castello, an actress, was discarded by his family. George Canning, however,

throughout life displayed a great respect for his mother, to whom he wrote every Sunday—the only day he had free.

In later years, on the other hand, a great number of actresses, whose names we could mention, have been raised to the ranks of the aristocracy. Not very long ago, the papers announced the death of the Countess Dowager of Craven, in whom playgoers did not fail to recognise Miss Brunton, who formerly belonged to the Covent Garden Company. These actresses, ennobled by marriage, immediately leave the boards, and are said to honour by their conduct the new condition given them in society. Among the English actresses, several are also married to physicians, literary men, and artists. The greater number of them retain the maiden name under which success has to some extent affianced them to the public. It is thus that one of the most brilliant actresses of the modern drama, and one of the most accomplished women in society, Miss Woolgar, is Mrs. Mellon, the wife of one of the first London musicians. On the other hand, many actors marry actresses; in the latter case the wife assumes the husband's name, and appears with him on the stage. One of these marriages was, some years ago, the occasion of a tragical event. A young, poor actor, of the name of Crowther, succeeded in gaining the good graces of Miss Vincent, the manageress of the Victoria, who was rich, good

looking, and lived brilliantly. They were married: but before even leaving the church, the actor gave unequivocal signs of mental aberration. His madness was attributed to different causes; some presumed that it was the change of fortune that turned his head, while others asserted that he had in a corner of his heart another affection that pursued him like a demon. Miss Vincent has since died, but her husband, I believe, is still living in a lunatic asylum.

Another conjugal episode made a great sensation in a Scotch town, and it may afford an idea of the romance of theatrical life in England. On a certain evening "The battle of Sedgemoor" was being performed at the Glasgow Adelphi Theatre, in which Mrs. Du Bourgh, a much admired actress, successfully filled one of the principal parts. At the moment when she came on the stage, a tall gentleman, with a military air, rose several times in the pit, evidently suffering from extreme agitation and exclaimed, "My wife, by heavens, my wife!" The spectators around him knew not what to think, especially when they saw the actress faint. The performance continued, however, but between the acts, Mr. Miller, who was at that time manager of the theatre, came up to the stranger. "This actress," he said to him, "has been engaged in my company for the last three years, and, as manager, I am bound to protect her reputation. I have not the honour of

knowing your name; but she cannot be your wife, as she was married to a Mr. Du Bourgh, at whose death I was present." "My name," the military-looking man said, "is Lieutenant Lewis. It is painful to me to learn that my wife has been married to another man; but it is partly my own fault, or at least that of our destiny; at any rate I must see her." The interview really took place, and the result of their mutual explanations was that Mr. Lewis was not mistaken. They had been married when very young in England, Lewis at that time being a private in the army, and the future Mrs. Du Bourgh, an actress. The birth of a child was the result of their union. Some time after the regiment received orders to go abroad. In vain did the young soldier ask leave to take his wife with him; the number of permissions being limited, he merely gained the favour of not being separated from his son, who was then three years of age. The vessel started, and, for nineteen years, through negligence, or a fatality difficult of explanation, husband and wife heard nothing of each other. Their fortunes had greatly changed, however; the simple private had risen by bravery and good conduct to a lieutenancy. Consoled by the society of his son, he did not dream of marrying again, though he really believed himself a widower. The actress, who for her part had greatly improved in her profession, having heard that her husband was killed in

action, on the contrary married again, and her second husband had been dead for eighteen months. As for Lieutenant Lewis, he had come straight from Liverpool, where he had landed from the transport that at length brought him to his native shores. The couple were married again at a chapel in Glasgow, and Mrs. Lewis resolved to leave the stage, but she previously announced a farewell performance. Lieutenant Lewis, who had some dramatic talent himself, performed on that night the part of Jaffier in "Venice Preserved." The theatre was crowded, as the adventure was known through the city, and the actress's benefit produced a large sum. The next day Mr. and Mrs. Lewis started for Liverpool.

The character of English actors has been in turn immoderately attacked and praised according to the point of view from which moralists regarded it. I will only confine my attention to facts. The criminal statistics are decidedly in favour of the stage. No member of the profession was ever tried for serious crime, and no comedian was ever hanged. Must we conclude from this that English actors are exempt from faults? That would not be the opinion of old authors and managers, who especially reproach English actors with independence and vanity. It may be said that these are traits of character peculiar to actors in all countries; but in England they form an independent class among an independent people, and

display vanity among a nation too haughty to be vain. The first of these mental dispositions must be doubtless attributed to the short duration of their engagements and their erratic life. England counts among her theatrical celebrities a considerable number of nomadic players, who come like shadows in the different cities of the kingdom, and so depart.

The British isles even appear too narrow a sphere for their adventurous humour. These pilgrims of the dramatic art travel to the confines of the world. The English language, which has spread as far as the Saxon race over two hemispheres, offers them an immense advantage in this respect. A London actor goes to Australia or America, much as a French comedian would proceed to Brussels. New Holland has its theatres peopled by English actors, one of whom even occupies a seat in the Colonial Parliament. Brooke, who came out a few years ago in London, in the part of Othello, with great applause, started one fine day for Australia, whence he now announces his intention to return to England. A clever actress, who performs at the Haymarket, Mrs. Charles Young, was taken when very young by her mother, who was also an actress, to that island of paradoxes, where she lived seventeen years. The New World offers even a larger and more fertile field for the excursions of the cosmopolitan actors who are so numerous in England. Charles Kem-

ble and his daughter, Charles Kean, Mathews, and many others, proceeded thither to augment or repair their fortunes. Many amusing anecdotes are told of the way in which some English actors behave to court the good graces of Brother Jonathan. One of them having to repeat the two well-known lines of Shakspere, beginning, "Now is the winter of our discontent," thought proper to read the "sun of New York," for the "sun of York."

An old English actor belonging to Covent Garden, known as the elder Chapman, had the idea of building a theatre for himself at slight expense in America; it is true that it was a floating theatre. The manager proceeded annually to one of the points of the Mississippi, some distance in the interior, where he built a wooden house, which he loaded on a raft, with decorations, dresses, and all the requisite materials. The stream, which was very rapid in Spring, carried the playhouse down with it. At each village, or before each large plantation, a halt was made, a flag hoisted, and a bugle blown. There was no want of an audience, for it was known that the theatre would not return till the next year. At times they met, when under way, one of the steamers going up to Louisville, and that was a day of grand receipts, for there were on board a thousand passengers who desired nothing better than to witness a performance, while the boat was taking

coal in. The dramatic corps was composed of the Chapman family, which increased and multiplied in spite of alligators and yellow fever. When the theatre at length reached New Orleans, it was only fit to be broken up and sold as firewood, for it would have been too expensive to convey it up the river again. The manager then returned to the interior by a steamer, where he built a new house. I do not believe that Chapman is still alive, but an Englishman, who recently returned from America, assured me that he had seen the actor's family, who continue the same trade.

The theatrical profession is left in England more than anywhere else to free will and personal initiative. There is no Conservatoire or any institution of the sort. Any one who wishes to embrace a theatrical career must take private lessons, which are given in London by old actors or actresses who have retired from the stage. In order to secure pupils, Miss Charming, or as her name may be, announces in the papers that she is about to open a provincial theatre next season, and will engage in preference those of her pupils who offer most promise. After receiving this primary instruction, the young aspirants to the profession most frequently join dramatic clubs, where they play the masterpieces of the British stage. The great business then is to secure an engagement, and for that purpose they diligently peruse the

Era, which is the theatrical *Moniteur*. They will find in it information about everything that can interest the theatrical world, and such advertisements as these; "Wanted a brigand"; "A sentimental lady wishes to form an engagement: expectations moderate." There too he finds the addresses of theatrical agents, who will insert his name on their lists for half-a-guinea, and procure him at a profit of ten per cent. the dresses and accessories, technically called "props," which he requires to appear with honour on the stage. Weeks and months pass, but the candidate has at least a right to call at the agent's office, and does so pretty frequently. At length an engagement turns up somewhere. It is naturally at a provincial theatre that the novice begins his career. There he speedily discovers that there is a good deal of tinsel and false colour behind the scenes, not only on the dresses and cheeks of the actresses, but also on things of this life. The members of the company are paid weekly, and generally receive a very small salary: still they are lucky if they receive it at all. A great number of provincial managers begin the season without any capital: they consequently rush into a difficult undertaking at their own risk and peril, but what is more serious still, at the risk and peril of their company also. After one or two months, the managerial brow becomes clouded, and one Saturday night he informs the actors, assembled in the

green-room, that he can no longer pay them more than half the salary agreed on. This news is received with gloomy silence, and is regarded as a foreboding of worse still. The receipts fall off daily: ere long the actors are not paid at all, and the theatre closes before the end of the season.

I assume, however, that the novice has had the good fortune to make an engagement with a safe and clever manager: in the latter case, he must undertake a frightful effort of memory in learning the parts which are changed nearly every evening, and he travels at night in an omnibus from one town to another, for it is rare that the same manager does not work several theatres at once within a given radius. One of the torments of the already well-tried company is frequently an old actor rendered savage by long want of success, and whom his fellow-actors regard as a decided bore. As he sees or declares he has seen all the great masters of the English stage, he discourages the efforts of novices, by comparing them to Kean, Liston, or Bannister, in every part they undertake. The novice in the theatrical art would do wrong to complain of the tribulations he meets with in the provinces, as all the celebrated actors have undergone them. The only hope that sustained them, and which sustains himself, is to appear some day at one of the theatres of the Metropolis. Still, everybody does not go to Corinth, especially since

Covent Garden and Drury Lane, the two theatres that employed most people, have renounced the drama.

Should we not say a word about actresses? After the Restoration, so soon as women appeared on the English stage, the dressing-room of the actresses was speedily invaded by the Court nobility. A decree of Charles II. was necessary to put a stop to this abuse. At the present day the interior of the theatres is almost tabooed to strangers. In the provinces, some managers even exercise a species of paternal authority over their company. They consider it their duty or their interest to constitute themselves guardians of morality. Most frequently, I am compelled to add, this watchfulness on the part of the manager only serves to save appearances. I at times meet in the streets of London a man who is still young, though his hair is gray: he looks about him wildly, and returns at night to a lunatic asylum. The chronicles of the stage point him out as a rich and honourable gentleman, whom the extravagance, coquetry, and infidelity of an English actress reduced to this state. At the little Rochester theatre, an actor, who was at the same time manager, came on the stage one day, just as the company were rehearsing a new play. He held in his hand a paper which he offered, with an air at once comical and serious, to the actors and actresses, who flocked around him, and said: "Well! what do you

say to this?" It was a printed document, by which his wife, who had long ago deserted him and had an engagement at a London theatre, informed him of the birth of a child that bore his name, by virtue of the legal axiom, *is est pater quem nuptiæ demonstrant.* We must not judge all English actresses, however, by this model; and there are many of them who honour the profession by their conduct as much as by their talent.

Domestic life is so strong in England that it resists better than elsewhere evil external influences. When he returns home, the actor is frequently a man of the world and father of a family; the actress is a wife, a mother, or perhaps a daughter, who has duties to fulfil towards her parents, and in whom it would generally be difficult to recognise the airy coquettish actress you saw the previous evening on the stage. Most of the English *artistes*, male and female, are very anxious to maintain an absolute separation between their theatrical and their domestic life. It is behind this barrier that their personal independence and dignity are intrenched. A low comedian of the first-class, who delighted a London public every night, but who was a very serious man at home, obtained a valet from the country: before engaging him, he stipulated that the servant should never set foot in a play-house. The latter resisted for a long time the attraction of forbidden fruit, but one morning when he, as usual, entered his master's

bed-room, he burst into a mighty laugh. "Wretch!" the actor exclaimed! "you saw me last night at the theatre!" And he discharged him, so anxious was he to secure the respect and consideration of all about him.

Actors are not renowned in any country for their economy or foresight: and that is their slightest fault. Beginning with Shakspere himself, however, a large number of actors may be cited in England who, after gaining an honourable fortune by the sweat of their brow, managed to keep it by care, and retired at the close of their career to a handsome country seat. I am, however, glad to see that in England institutions have come to the assistance of the weak side of the dramatic profession. Some, like the Dramatic, Equestrian, and Musical Sick Fund, propose to assist the various tribes of the theatrical family in their illnesses and immediate necessities. This society even advances, in certain cases and under certain conditions, the travelling expenses of actors and actresses, who would otherwise be unable to accept a provincial engagement. Some actors, who now live in luxury and enjoy a certain reputation, have been assisted at a grave moment by this society for mutual aid, for where is the actor who has not known hard times? There are other associations whose chief object is to relieve the infirmities of old age. Such are the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund, established by David Garrick, the Covent Garden

Theatrical Fund, and the Royal General Theatrical Fund. A real interest attaches to the origin of some of these savings' banks and providential funds established for *artistes* of all classes. More than a century and a half ago, a very excellent German instrumentalist, named Cuitch, came to England. He was at first supported and encouraged; but as he was of irregular habits, he at last fell into a frightful state of want, and was found dead one day in St. James's Market. A little while after, Festing, the celebrated violinist, was standing with some other musicians at the door of the Orange Coffee House, when he saw two children pass, driving she-asses before them to sell their milk. They were asked who they were, and were soon recognised as the orphans of poor Cuitch. Festing raised a subscription in the first place among his friends to assist these children; and then, after consulting with Dr. Green and other musicians, established, in 1713, a society to help native musicians, as well as the widows and orphans of members of the profession.

These societies are to a great extent kept up by slight subscriptions paid monthly by persons who expect some day or other to reap the profit of their foresight; but the treasury also receives voluntary gifts, and many of the subscribers only make their payment for the pleasure of doing good to their brethren. Actors and actresses are distinguished by their generosity. Mrs. Jordan was at Chester, where she had been performing, when she heard

that her washerwoman, a poor widow with three young children, had been mercilessly thrown into prison by a creditor. She went at once to the attorney and paid the debt. On the afternoon of the same day, she was walking on the city walls with her servant, when the rain compelled her to take shelter under one of the ruined porches that surmount the old Roman wall. She was followed there by the widow she had delivered from prison, and her children, who threw themselves at her feet and thanked her. The actress wiped away a tear, kissed the children on the forehead, and, slipping a guinea into the poor woman's hand, said, "Not a word more, but get up, my good creature." A Methodist preacher had been witness of this affecting scene. "Madam," he exclaimed, "pardon the liberty I take in addressing you, but would to Heaven all women were like you!" "You would hardly say that if you knew who I am," Mrs. Jordan replied with a smile. "And pray, who may you be?" "I am an actress, and you probably know my name, Mrs. Jordan." "It is a pity," the preacher added with a sigh, "but whoever you are you have done a good deed, and I hope your faults will be forgiven you." Have we a right to be more severe than the Methodist preacher, and is it not just to say that English actresses redeem many faults by their charity?

Another and very recent institution is of a far

more important character than the various benevolent funds connected with the theatrical world. I allude to the Dramatic College. The idea of this excellent work belongs to an actor, Mr. J. W. Anson, of the Adelphi, whose charity is indefatigable, and to Mr. Benjamin Webster, manager of the same theatre. Early in the seventeenth century, an actor of the name of Alleyn founded what is called in England a college, that is to say, a species of house of refuge for old age; but Dulwich College, though to some extent the issue of the stage, never benefited the members of the dramatic profession greatly. Messrs. Webster and Anson therefore resolved to found, nearly on the same model, an establishment where old actors and actresses, who had no means of livelihood, might rest their heads. Such a resolution was the more praiseworthy, because it has been observed that in England actors and actresses attain an advanced age. Macklin lived to be upwards of a hundred, and many others have also reached a most respectable age. This longevity, which might not be expected when we take into consideration the efforts and feverish struggles of a stage life, seems, however, to be a well established fact in all cases where the ordinary course of nature has not been interrupted by excesses, privations, or bad habits.*

* Bannister was one day about to drink a glass of brandy, when his physician remarked to him that it was the worst enemy he had. "I know it," the comedian answered; "but

A long old age is, according to the Bible, a blessing of God; but in order that it should be so, and not be converted into a curse, it must be based on honourable leisure, and the assurance of a certain amount of comfort. It is in order to procure these advantages for actors that the founders of the Dramatic College are labouring. The first stone of this building was laid in 1860, by the lamented Prince Consort. At the present day ten houses, built so as to form twenty separate and independent domiciles, already stand on a heath at Maybury. There will be a magnificent vestibule and library, and other common rooms. So soon as the works are completed, this edifice, which has been justly christened the most glorious monument raised to the memory of William Shakspere, will receive pensioners elected by the votes of the life governors and the annual subscribers to the society. In the meanwhile, the pensioners (for the College is in existence) receive fourteen shillings a-week.

Perhaps, it will be asked, how so liberal an institution could have been established in so short a time. Everybody has contributed; the dramatic funds all subscribed; actors like Charles Kean and Webster gave as much as two hundred and fifty pounds out of their own purse; and, lastly, the London theatres gave benefit performances for it.

you are also aware that the Scriptures order us to love our enemies." For all that, though, he lived to a great age.

An interesting scene took place in 1860 at the Crystal Palace. It was a Fancy Fair, at which the articles were sold on account of the Dramatic College. The prettiest and most celebrated actresses of London were converted on that day into shopwomen. The merest trifles fetched one or two sovereigns; such prices had never been heard of, but who had ever bought before of such dealers? The Dramatic College does not propose merely to support and shelter old age; it will also stretch out its wings over the children of actors and actresses. There will be a school for them, to which Webster has already given, as an honourable souvenir and a good omen, the name of George Canning, who was the son of an actress.*

Though English actors have a reputation for living a long time, they are mortal after all, and after providing for the wants of their old age, their last abode had to be attended to. The national Church, which had not excommunicated them during life, does not refuse them after death either its prayers or a place in the parish cemetery. I

* A sad circumstance doubtless contributed to this anxiety for the children of actors. A little while ago poor Stevens, harlequin of the City of London theatre, died in want, leaving an orphan son behind him. An aged and excellent woman, Mrs. Collins, took the child out of the workhouse, and resolved to bring him up herself. As she was in want, and too feeble through her age to earn much by needlework, she accepted the assistance of a few benevolent persons on behalf of her adopted son. Among those who assisted the actor's orphan is a Protestant minister, Mr. Robert Nicholson.

have known educated Englishmen who could not understand the painful circumstances that followed Molière's death, for such acts of intolerance are strange to their manners and ideas. An actor, of the name of Palmer, died in 1798 on the stage of the Liverpool Theatre Royal, at the moment when he was playing the principal character in a play adapted from Kotzebue. His funeral was performed with all the religious honours, and on his grave a stone was placed with this inscription, taken from Kotzebue's work :—"There is another and a better world." Several celebrities of the English stage even rest in Westminster Abbey. On the death of Mrs. Clive, a request was made to the Dean and Chapter of that celebrated Abbey that the actress might be buried there. Permission was given; one of the canons merely remarking that it was time to set bounds to the ambition of the actors for posthumous honours, "for otherwise," he added, "Westminster Abbey would soon become a sort of Gothic green-room." Those members of the profession, however, who are neither a Garrick nor a Henderson, do not sleep after death by the side of the great statesmen, celebrated poets, and renowned philosophers. Up to very recently, actors had no cemetery of their own; but in 1855 an incident led to the purchase of a piece of ground, in which the great theatrical family might rest together in death. On the morning of Christmas-day, 1855, Mr. Anson lost a daughter in the flower of her age.

The strict duties of the stage prevented him burying her on a week-day, for he was obliged to perform every night, and attend rehearsals every day. According to the custom of many busy Englishmen, he deferred the ceremony till the Sunday, and it took place at Woking Cemetery. In the centre of this great London necropolis, Anson was so struck by the size and beauty of the spot, that he resolved to obtain a place for his professional brethren in this field of the dead. The following year he published with this object a dramatic almanack, whose success was considerable. With the profits of this publication, and the assistance of the Sick Fund Association, he purchased an acre of land, which has been laid out with considerable taste, and to which he gave the name of "Theatrical Allotment." The inauguration took place on June 10, 1858, and Benjamin Webster presided at this affecting ceremony, which was attended by upwards of two hundred actors and actresses. The second person interred in the Dramatic Cemetery was the wife of the man who bought the ground. The actor had the following line from the "Fatal Dowry" engraved on her monument:—

"Goodness and she dwell in the same tomb."

The theatrical profession, as we have seen, has a tendency to become more elevated in England; and I need only appeal for proof to the testimony of the noble institutions founded by the actors

themselves, and bearing a profound character of dignity. The public have not remained indifferent to such remarkable facts. All classes of English society like the theatre; all are interested in the life of the actors and actresses being honoured by a moral feeling; for it is from the stage that everybody asks at night a few moments of recreation, after those hours of toil from which no privileged caste escapes in this country. In a land where comfort is not separated from the progress of manners, the various efforts made by dramatic *artistes* to ameliorate their social condition, by trusting to foresight, union, and charity, have been hailed as a good omen of the regeneration of the art. Should a dramatic work be written worthy of the nation that produced Shakspere, English actors will be better prepared to interpret on the stage that ideal of virtue, which they have pursued through the struggles and difficulties of a stormy career.

Theatrical life should naturally lead us to study English literature and literary men. Declining for the present such a difficult task, I beg to call the attention of my readers to a material agent in the art of writing.

CHAPTER IX.

PAPER-MAKING—PROGRESS OF THE ART—THE OLDEST ENGLISH PAPER MILL—FOURDRINIER—THE RAG SHOP—A CURIOUS COLLECTION — THE STREET GRUBBER — RAG-PICKING — MARINE STORES — VALUE OF RAGS — FOREIGN EXPORT DUTIES—PROGRESS OF FREE TRADE.

THOMAS FULLER, an English moralist of the seventeenth century, fancied he could trace the characters of the different European nations in the nature of the paper they manufactured at that day. According to him, Venetian paper was elegant, subtile, and reminded him of a courtier; French paper was light and delicate; while Dutch paper, corpulent and coarse, sucked in ink like a sponge, and was thus an image of the race which tried to absorb everything it touched. After the same principle might it not be possible to distinguish in English paper, which was very scarce in Fuller's time, some of the features of the English character, such as strength and steadiness? Without dwelling further on these analogies, are we not justified in saying, that there are few products on which English trade has imprinted a deeper stamp of individuality? English paper is at once recognised

by the qualities that distinguish it. On the other hand, paper-making is a source of labour and wealth for our English neighbours. The number of hands employed in the paper mills of Great Britain and Ireland, has recently been estimated at from eighty to one hundred thousand. The paper question has even become during the last few years a grave political question. It was regarded from all sides by the economists, merchants, and moralists of the United Kingdom. The abolition of the paper duty had the perilous honour of dividing, not long ago, the Houses of Lords and Commons, agitating the country by meetings, and carrying by storm the Conservative opposition, owing to the strength of public opinion. The English nation answered the persons who proposed to untax objects of primary necessity, such as tea and sugar: "Give us first cheap paper"; thus preferring the wants of intellectual life to those of food. These are motives sufficient, I fancy, why I should give room in this series of essays to the English paper manufacture.

It will be hardly credited that paper-making is a recent trade in Great Britain. In order to prove this, it will be sufficient for me to trace in a few words the history of the invention of paper, and indicate the moment when England introduced a branch of trade which now bears such fine fruit. In 1755 and 1763 the Royal Society of the Sciences, established at Göttingen, offered large

prizes for an investigation into the extremely obscure origin of this invention, but its efforts were crowned with very small success. According to English archæologists, paper owes its origin to the Chinese. From China, where it has been known for upwards of two thousand years, and was manufactured of bamboo, mulberry bark, and sometimes of cotton, it is said to have passed into Persia, and thence into Arabia. It is difficult to follow the course of these travelling trades, which have traversed the world like seed sown by the wind. We can, however, settle two starting-points whence the art of paper-making found its road to the heart of Europe—Constantinople and Spain. From Constantinople, where it had been transplanted by the Greeks, the art spread into Italy, *viâ* Venice, and at a later date into Germany. From Spain, where it was introduced by the Moors, it was propagated in France.

In this question of origin, the use of paper must not be confounded with its manufacture. The use of paper in Europe is very old. According to some learned men, MSS. written on cotton paper exist in Italy that date back as far as the eighth century; according to others the only authentic MS. on paper dates from 1050. Among the archæological treasures preserved in the Tower of London, is a letter addressed to Henry III., and written prior to 1222, on thick paper. These dates, nevertheless, teach us little; in the first place,

nothing proves that the documents handed down to us are the first of the sort; and secondly, they do not tell us the moment when paper ceased to be an exotic product and became a native one. Paper was originally known in Europe by the name of "Greek parchment," and it is easy to explain this name by the invariable customs of trade. When one discovery succeeds another, it marches for a lengthened period in the track of the one which preceded it, and strives to resemble it in form. It is thus that paper, which was destined at a later date to dethrone all the other industrial productions on which people were accustomed to write, humbly offered itself at the outset as a substitute for parchment.

The first paper mills established in Europe were for the manufacture of cotton paper. One existed in Tuscany at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and another was built in 1390, at Nuremberg, by a certain Ullman Stromer, who wrote the first book on the art of paper-making. All his workmen took a solemn oath not to teach others the secret of the manufacture, and not to make use of it on their own account. This secret was so well guarded throughout the whole of Europe, that, two or three centuries later, the Dutch prohibited, under penalty of death, the exportation of mills. Does not this single fact explain the slowness that marked the spread of an art, of which its proprietors, one after the other,

showed themselves so jealous? The manufacture of paper from linen followed that from cotton several centuries later. This innovation appears, moreover, to have been gradual, the old manufacturers having in the first instance mixed calico and linen rags, until they made a separate use of the latter. However this may be, the use of paper became common throughout Europe from this moment. It was just the time, the Protestant social economists of England declared, and never did a discovery arise more opportunely, for the monks were engaged in destroying the treasures of Greek and Latin literature, by obliterating them from the parchment, in order to substitute for them puerile legends and chronicles. A clergyman of the last century even wrote a treatise on the subject, under the title, "Has not *the discovery* of paper been more useful than that of printing to the cause of Religious Reformation, and the progress of enlightenment?" Without dwelling on an unnecessary parallel between the services the two allies have rendered, or discussing the more or less extensive claim they may have to our gratitude, we may fairly proclaim that the invention of linen paper was a factor in the history of the ideas which altered the face of the world in the sixteenth century.

Up to this time, Great Britain had not at all participated in a trade which was already flourishing among the different continental nations. It was only towards the close of the sixteenth century

that the oldest paper mill of which authentic traces exist, was built in this country, and that too by a foreigner. The new branch of manufacture was slowly developed; and for a long time after, England obtained paper from Italy, Germany, France, and Holland. William III., by the advice of Parliament, granted a licence and privileges to the Huguenots who sought a refuge in England, in order to encourage them in establishing paper mills. About the year 1695, a company was formed in Scotland for the purpose of fostering this new branch of trade by extensive capital. In 1749, a certain Francis Joy received from Parliament a sum of two hundred pounds, as a reward for having established the first paper mill that worked in the north of Ireland. We are bound to believe that, in spite of these attempts, the art of manufacturing paper at first made but slight progress in the United Kingdom, since the authors of the last century generally complained that the country was still a tributary to strangers for its annual supply of paper, and paid the Continent enormous sums.

This feature of British trade only attained a certain degree of perfection from 1760 to 1766: and it was owing to a manufacturer of the name of Whatman, who opened his mills at Kent. Prior to becoming a paper maker, Whatman had been a militia officer, and had also travelled in Holland, where he was attached to the British Embassy. In that country he visited the paper mills, and collected

facts on which his mind was destined to work. On returning to England, he made himself a reputation which still endures.* But let me hasten to modern times. The machine for continuous paper, invented by a Frenchman, Louis Robert, was introduced into England at the beginning of this century, by John Gamble, brother-in-law of M. Didot, who was at that time owner of the Essonne paper mills. John Gamble went into partnership with Henry Fourdrinier, a celebrated London paper maker, who expended enormous sums in improving the machine. He succumbed in the struggle and became bankrupt: but the invention triumphed through his losses and commercial disaster. By what enormous progress has this been followed! I was acquainted in France with a man of great genius, the Abbé Frère, who had a system of his own about what he called social periods. According to his calculations, France was in the age of application, while England was in that of improvement. Without discussing such a system, I may say that his views appear to me just as regards the paper trade. The English have incontestably borrowed their manufacturing processes from the whole of Europe, but they have been marked by a progressive amelioration which exclusively belongs to them. We shall be able at once to form an idea

* The paper known by the name of Whatman's is made in the present day at two separate mills, which, I am told, belong to the descendants of this celebrated maker.

of the importance of this branch of trade in England, by the amount of capital invested in paper mills. It has very lately been estimated at from seven to nine millions of pounds.

English paper may be studied from three different points of view: before, during, and after manufacture. Before, it is rags, and this industrial basis is the cause of a very extensive inward and outward commerce, for, in addition to its own rags, England collects those of the whole world, with the exception of France and Belgium, just at present. The paper factories or mills exist over the entire surface of Great Britain, though they are specially found on the running streams of Kent, Berkshire, and Herts, and in Scotland on the Esk: but it is in London above all that we shall be able to form an idea of the consumption of this trade product.

I stopped one day in a street of Deptford in front of a shop, all covered with inscriptions and hieroglyphics. About fifteen feet from the ground and over the door a fearful mannikin was hanging from an iron bar. It was a sort of monstrous doll with three heads, painted black and crowned with a horsehair wig. On this clumsy carved wooden face, the hatchet or the chisel had exaggerated the features of the Ethiopian race, a flattened nose and blubber lips. There were neither legs nor arms, but the body was indicated by three hoops covered with canvas. It looked like an idol, a fetish cut out of the trunk of a tree by the Congo

negroes. Another circumstance attracted my attention: it was an enormous bone fixed to the shutters by an iron bar, and which was a fragment of some antediluvian colossus. On this relic—which was worn by wind and rain, but which, on reflection, might have belonged to a horse or an ox—was written in red letters: "Make haste and sell me your bones!" I also read on a piece of cardboard: "Sell me your fat." These inscriptions had nothing very reassuring about them, and had I been in that Fan village where M. du Chaillu must have spent a very uncomfortable time, I should have fancied that designs were entertained on my life.

Although the street was poor and gloomy, the faces around me had the sinister aspect of want, and the house before which I was standing had a suspicious look. I was well aware, however, that I did not reside in a country of cannibals. Pieces of paper gummed to all the window frames, and covered with pen and ink notices, or coarsely coloured pictures, soon dissipated my doubts. It was a lecture on domestic economy, in prose, verse, and caricatures, which was reduced, it is true, to a single precept, not to let anything be wasted in the household: but this solitary precept was illustrated by a number of picturesque illustrations. One of the drawings represented a tall thin woman, whose dress clung round her as tightly as if it were a winding-sheet. On the other side, the same female was visible with an enormous

crinoline and fashionable clothes, pushing before her a truck loaded with swollen sacks. A young man stopped, astonished at the change that had taken place in the toilet and outline of the fair one, who could hardly be recognised, and simply asked the reason. "You see," she answered, pointing proudly to her truck and her sacks, "I now sell my rags."

I had, then, before my eyes, one of those places known by the name of rag and bottle shops, which purchase all sorts of refuse articles. If the posters may be believed, this establishment, which had at first repulsed me by a savage air, exerted a blessed influence over public morality. In quarrelsome families, it re-established a good understanding between husband and wife by the sacred link of economy: it aided the progress of the sciences, by supplying them with worn-out materials, which chemistry and the industrial arts renovate: it even paved the way for universal peace, by contributing to the manufacture of paper, which, allied with the printing press, must emancipate all slaves and reconcile all nations. I was beginning, consequently, to recover from my first adverse impression, and think that the rag and bottle shop was a branch of the savings' bank, when a fact shook my confidence. A man and a woman dressed in rags, both bowed down, although they were still young, entered the place which many Englishmen call the chamber of horrors. I asked

myself what they were going to do there, as they had neither bag nor bundle (I do not include the *hotte* of the *chiffonier*, for the simple reason that it is unknown in England): the man had on cracked shoes, and the woman a shawl with a hole in its back. Experience soon taught me that wretchedness, however denuded it may be, has always something to sell, for after a few minutes—the time to conclude a bargain—the man came out with bare feet, and the woman had no longer a shawl on. They then both proceeded to a public-house a few doors off, and drank a glass of gin at the bar.

Heaven forbid, though, that I should abuse these poor people, for they furnished me with an idea. For some minutes past I had felt a lively desire to enter the shop and ask the master for some information about his sign and trade. The man had not an inviting face, and though I sought, I found no proper excuse for going in. What I had just witnessed put me on the track, and I asked myself if I too had not something to sell. I entered deliberately and took my handkerchief from my pocket. The man examined it in anything but a flattering way: "The silk" (he said to me) "is good for nothing; when once old (he laid a stress on this word), we cannot turn it to any account; had it been linen, it would have been different." For the honour of my handkerchief I will not tell the price he offered me, and which I eagerly accepted without bargaining.

This deal, unimportant though it was, did not fail to unwrinkle the ill-tempered and, what I may venture to call, ragged face of the master of the place. I took advantage of it to ask him the origin of the black figure which, from time immemorial, has distinguished rag and bottle shops in populous districts. "I did not invent it," he answered me, "for I am no scholar: but I have heard say that a young woman one day went to foreign parts in search of her lover. After a few years, for some reason or another, she returned to England with a black baby. Let us suppose that she found it by the roadside, for we must always be charitable toward females. Others say that she brought it with her as a speculation, but finding that black children had no value in England, she wrapped it up in a bundle of rags, and sold the lot to one of the first shops in our trade that existed in our country. It was in this very street; for Deptford, as everybody knows, had the honour of being the birthplace of our trade. We must suppose that brats were quieter at that day than they are now, for this one did not cry when taken into the shop, and allowed the female time to escape. The discovery, however, was soon made, and the baby was brought up through charity. This black infant turned out to be a girl, and when she grew up she got married. She opened a shop in London, and made a fortune in the rag and bottle line. It is even said that

she was the ancestress of all the dealers that now exist in the great metropolis. The shops of this nature which she and her children started were at first fifty in number, but they have increased and multiplied since then as you see. It is now easy to understand why we hang up a black doll at our door." "Very good," I said to him, "but that does not explain the three heads, unless they are meant as a sign of the fertility of the negress." "Exactly," he answered: "did I not tell you she was the great great grandmother of all the second-hand dealers whose trade, spreading from town to town, now extends throughout the three kingdoms of England, Ireland, and Scotland?"*

For the first time I began to take a look at the objects without a name by which I was surrounded. There was a very simple reason for my delay: the interior of the shop was so dark, owing to its arrangement and the paper pasted on the window panes, that I required a certain time to accustom my eyes to the obscurity. It was with difficulty I could see the speaker, whose brown and coarse-featured face pleaded, however, for the authenticity of the legend. A ray of light that filtered through the half-open door enabled me, however, to look

* I am afraid that this explanation given by all the masters of rag and bottle shops does not satisfy antiquarians. The latter have adopted one which is far more probable. According to them, these shops are the successors of the old shops where curiosities brought from China or India were sold, and which had a joss as their sign.

round me and survey this receptacle of every variety of wretchedness, decrepitude and refuse. The disorder added to the sadness and filth of the garments. On the walls could be read the history of the grandeur and decadence of all the objects connected with feminine toilet. There were dresses of every colour, bonnets covered with a veil that now only hid their filth, satin slippers which had danced for several winters, ribbons that retained an air of faded coquetry, and black velvet masks which recalled past delights, thrown pell-mell with English uniforms which had probably been under fire at Balaclava. All these fripperies, of which the connecting link of time, place, and natural associations, was broken, had something horrible and melancholy about them. The rag and bottle shop, in spite of its exterior and want of cleanliness, would have been of a nature to arouse the reflections of a philosopher. Had not these garments, which hardly retained a shape, lived the life of persons? Had they not witnessed the joys and sufferings, the festivals and tragedies, of humanity?

The imagination might busy itself with the end of an embroidered garter, a fragment of a pair of stays, or a hair bracelet, whose fastening of mosaic gold was broken. In the midst of this pandemonium of old clothes, bones, and broken glass, rags, especially white rags, occupied the post of honour. They were evidently the shopkeeper's

favourites. "I see," I said to him, "that your trade does not go on badly." He assumed a contrite air. "I am not accustomed to complain," he answered, "though I pay a long price for all I purchase. We do business with the poor principally, and, thank goodness, there is no want of them in this neighbourhood. If you will promise to sell me your rags and old papers in future, I will show you my stores." I readily accepted the proposal, and we went through rooms and a yard crammed with objects in which the successive degradations of wretchedness and decay could be followed. From a black garret, in which the wind agitated all sorts of shapeless fragments hanging from ropes—a perfect *danse macabre* of rags—we went down to a sort of cellar, lighted by a window looking out on the street, where two men were engaged in sorting the rags.

The dealer then explained to me that up to this point the various pieces of stuffs were confounded in the same pile, like the dead in a cemetery. The cellar in which we were was the valley of Jehoshaphat, in which was held the last judgment of the rags collected from all corners of the globe. "Then, there are good and bad?" I asked him. "Of course," the man answered seriously: "the rags are classified in our trade according to their usefulness: each of them has its value, employment, and destination. The fabrics you value most when new, are generally those we

care the least for. Velvet, for instance, which is so grand, and silk, which is the pride of so many a fine lady, cannot be transformed by trade, when both have gone their turn. Cloth and woollen stuffs, although they are expensive, are of no good in their old age, except to make a sort of druggeting or coarse cloth, in which the workhouse poor, prisoners, and foundlings, are dressed. There is a machine which tears cloth rags, and produces from them a sort of texture known by the name of devil's dust—and is it not a capital name, for only poor devils buy such stuff at a cheap rate? Formerly this refuse was only employed as manure to fertilise the fields. Talk to me, though, about calico, and especially linen! Here are rags which, in spite of their humble appearance, possess the value of obscure and unknown merit. Of them is made the paper on which our poets, our musicians, our artists, deposit the symbols that render them immortal. What is the marriage contract on which our gracious Queen herself wrote her name made of? Of rags. What are bank notes, ledgers, and bank accounts? Rags, nothing but rags. Do you now understand the dignity of these things?" And he pointed to a pile of old linen to which the two workmen were giving the shape of rags, that is to say, depriving them, by cutting and tearing them, of any shape connected with our use.

The emphasis with which the rag and bottle shop keeper had read to me some of his bills did

not astonish me, for I knew that these dealers, in spite of their want of grammar, nearly all have pretensions to wit. I even proposed to buy of him a collection of coarsely-coloured caricatures, of which he possessed duplicates. It was a history of the political events, fashions, and follies of the day, in some cases, even of English manners, with an invariable conclusion or moral, always referring to the sale of rags and other refuse articles. The last event to which reference was made, was the war with China. On a sheet of bad paper I saw Mr. Punch, followed by the inevitable dog Toby, and loaded with an enormous sack, that evidently contained the produce of his looting in the Celestial Empire. He had not lost any time, for the vessel from which he had landed was visible in the distance. Punch and his dog were received with open arms by the purchaser, who was standing in the door of his shop to bid them welcome.

On returning to the gloomy room that served as a sanctuary for all these stores, we found a third person. He was a common street grubber. I mean one of those men who go about towns and the country with a bag on their back, and whose cry of "Rags and bones" is well known throughout England. In fact, they go about from house to house, buying these and other comparatively worthless articles. I understood that this man had come to make a deal with the master of the shop, and I went away in order not to impede their

transactions, determined, however, not to lose out of sight a man who represented another phase of the trade in old articles. The latter was a nomadic purchaser—the wandering Jew of the trade. In a few minutes he emerged from the shop with an empty sack, and a discontented look. I went up to him with the question, whether the established dealers did not plunder the poor rag gatherers. As this conventional question was doubtless the echo of his thoughts, he consented to enter into conversation with me. His face, too, soon became unwrinkled, for he was a reckless philosopher; a sort of Diogenes who did not sleep in a tub—though he boasted of having emptied many a barrel of beer—but at a low lodging-house.

As we walked along, he told me a portion of his history, mingling with it touches of wit and sentiment, which made me fear lest a poetical ambition had ruined the rag trade. "I was born," he said to me, "a few miles from here, at the little village of Bromley. In my boyhood I worked in the fields, and afterwards had twenty situations, but did not remain in one of them, for I was so weak and indolent. My father and mother forgot to have me taught to read: had it not been for that, I might have become an author. I was grown up before I knew any way of gaining my livelihood. I was wandering, or rather vagabonding, about one day, barefooted, in a narrow lane, which runs between two quickset hedges at the

foot of a wood near Plumstead. A heavy wain loaded with hay was in front of me, dragged by three horses, and leaving here and there handfuls of fodder on the tall bushes that bordered the road. I at first paid little attention to this: but passing that way again two or three days after, I saw the birds—those rag-gatherers of the air—collecting in their beaks the hay caught in the hedges. This was a sort of warning from Heaven, and I asked myself whether there were not something I could also pick up in the world? At the end of a week, I came across an old ragman, who went about the Kentish villages. I was careful not to tell him of the idea with which the birds had impressed me; but he understood, for all that, that I wanted to feather my nest. He offered to teach me his trade, on condition that we made a division of the profits every night. He was a worthy man, and left me now and then a bone to gnaw. He knew all the houses round, stood very well with the servants, for whom he always had a joke, and knew how to turn an honest penny. We soon parted company again; as he had foreseen this, he did not pick an idle quarrel with me, but said, 'All I ask of you is not to follow in my track. Everybody must live; I will not poach on your manor, so don't you do so on mine.' We each arranged the district we would work, and parted, after heartily draining a glass of whisky to our mutual prosperity. Since that day I have

always lived by my bag. There are good days and bad days, for luck does a great deal in our trade. I have not had the fortune of some of my companions, who travel with a truck and a donkey. I go a-foot; but, thank Heaven, my feet are good, and I am not afraid of either fatigue, wind, rain, or snow. In my solitary walks I have contracted, like most of my trade, the habit of talking aloud to myself, and that draws down on me the jokes or stones of the idle boys; but a man must be a philosopher. The worst is, that the world is growing too enlightened; formerly housekeepers did not know the value of the rags or the other articles they threw into the dust hole. Now-a-days it is quite different; the little girls even sell their rags—and will ask ruinous prices—to buy dolls."

It will be seen from the narrative of the perambulating ragman, that the trade of the *chiffonnier* differs greatly in England and France. In the former country, rags are not picked up, but bought. There are, I grant, a few old women who mysteriously glide about the deserted lanes before daybreak and at night, with an apron fastened together at the corners. They pick up everything they come across. In Scotland they even have a hook to stir up the dirt; but neither in Scotland nor in England does the employment merit the title of a trade. These poor creatures seem ashamed of what they are doing, avoid the looks

of passers by, and evidently regard rag-picking as an ungrateful and temporary task to which necessity reduces them. Everybody, however, has not the right to buy refuse. A young Irish girl tapped one morning at my front door with a basket in her hand, containing vases of rice paste, of rather elegant shape, and artificial wax flowers. I asked her the price she wanted for the articles. This question made her blush, as if it were an improper proposal. She explained to me that she had no licence, and in consequence could not take money. "How, then, can I buy those vases?" I asked her. "By giving me," she answered, "your old clothes or rags. Taking money would expose me to a heavy fine." I understood that the girl practised the primitive form of trading; I mean the system of barter.

All the rag dealers are more or less connected with the rag and bottle shops. In London, these shops especially flourish in poor districts, and in the neighbourhood of the docks, where they take the names of marine stores, because they buy old ropes and other refuse from ships. I do not wish to say that they are not to be found in other parts of the town; in London there are neither handsome nor ugly districts; in the sense that behind the most fashionable streets, and in the heart of the wealthiest localities, are concealed yards, lanes, and obscure alleys, which a foreigner never sees, but which the Cockney now and then

passes through, to shorten his road. In these the rag and bottle shops will be found at the West End; but the aristocracy of the region is spread over them, and they assume the pompous name of "warehouses." With a proud consciousness of their situation, the latter disdain the second class stores that throng the lower districts, and are far above offering any pictorial inducements to customers. "We are in an age of progress," the owner of one of these warehouses said to me, "and we must advance with the age." Their customers consist chiefly of ladies' maids, cooks, and footmen belonging to good families. The social condition of the rags, if I may be permitted the expression, also changes with the district; but they do not look the better for that, as there is no so sorry a sight as pride in tatters.

In spite of the high tone of morality the rag and bottle shops affect, a detective told me that they were employed in more than one instance to conceal domestic robbery. Some of these shops, indeed, stand under special surveillance. A fact adds to the gravity of these suspicions: an important ship-building yard having suspended its works a few years ago, thirty or forty marine stores in the vicinity speedily disappeared. It was very easy to explain their closing, when it was learned that the pilfering that went on in the yard was estimated at a thousand a year. I have dwelt on the rag shops, owing to their connection with the

manufacture of paper; but from a social aspect, these establishments represent an enormous mass of small dealings, whose value taken altogether becomes very considerable.

From the rag and bottle shop the rags, stuffed in sacks, pass into the hands of the wholesale dealer, who collects them to sell eventually to the paper-mills. In the same town of Deptford one of these stores can be seen, a vast shed, covered inside with spiders' webs, and whose roof, tottering with old age, rests on bare and dilapidated walls. Although collected in England, all the rags, however, are not English. Corn growing in the United Kingdom has for some years past greatly restricted that of flax and hemp, and hence the English paper makers were compelled to turn to foreign countries, in order to procure the basis or primary material of their trade. The great portion of the rags has crossed the seas. Some arrive from India and Australia; it is true that both these countries are still England; but many rags are obtained from the Continent. The latter have travelled in bags, bearing the name of the country whence they came, and on board vessels sailing from the Baltic or the Mediterranean, though most frequently from the ports of Bremen and Hamburg. Of the North European rags, most saw light on the plains of Nuremburg, or in different provinces of Germany; in their youth they formed part of feminine attire, when old and reduced to their

present condition, they were collected by Jews, who visit the towns and villages in pursuit of their prey. Some of the English paper makers have even their own agents in the German provinces, who purchase of these Jews the daily or weekly crop.

More than one English author has written the memoirs of a rag, its changes from the day when it was cut in the flax-field by the sickle of the harvest women up to that when, converted into fine white linen, it glided proudly and eagerly into the bride's *corbeille.* Next are described the irreparable ravages of time, which deprives the lilies and linen of their freshness, and finally the gloomy decadence of this article of clothing, passing from hand to hand, from humiliation to humiliation, until the moment when, worn out with old age, it is thrown into the basket and sold to the rag man. Might not the foreign rags, which come such a distance, have still more curious stories to tell us? This piece of white linen may have been the chemise of an Oriental princess; that rag of blue stuff was the blouse of a peasant on the banks of the Rhine or Danube. All these rags are now confounded in the same obscurity; the coarsest are even those to which trade attaches the greatest value, for they have more body, and supply a richer fibre for the manufacture of paper. Although England obtains the greater part of her rags from the Continent, there are many complaints about the market not

being sufficiently extended. Hitherto, France, Belgium, and Spain have been almost closed against the paper-makers. In the name of the principles that dictated the commercial treaty with France, England now demands the removal of this prohibition, which is warmly defended by the French paper-makers as the old citadel of their trade. It is quite true that France has very lately made a sacrifice to the ideas of free trade; she no longer defends her rags by an absolute prohibition, but she has placed on them an export duty of 6*l.* 2*s.* 4*d.* per ton. The concession, I am bound to add, has not at all satisfied the English paper-makers, who demand either entire free trade, or at least a more generous tariff on the part of France. According to them the existing tax is equivalent to a prohibition. In other countries, for instance, Russia, Prussia, Austria, the Netherlands, Italy, and Portugal, native rags are also protected. I mean by this that there is an export duty upon them, varying according to the countries. England sells a small portion of her rags again to America, but retains the other and much larger portion for the private consumption of her paper-mills.

From the social point of view, rags constitute a product *sui generis*. Some merchants even refuse them the name of product, and have disdainfully classified them as refuse. Both opinions may be conciliated by calling them the produce

of wear and tear. However this may be, this new fact creates them a peculiar situation in the history of the social trades. A great number of persons are interested in increasing the primary matter in which the manufacturers work; such as cotton, wool, and silk; but if we all make rags, we do so regretfully. It is a product developed in spite of the producer, much as death is developed from life. "Rags if you like, but I am fond of my rags," the poor man answers the *chiffonnier* who asks him for his blouse. However much eloquence and wit the rag and bottle shops may expend, they will never persuade a single mother of a family to part with her old linen before it falls to pieces; the result is that the chances of increase are far more limited as regards rags than any other material that serves as a basis for the useful arts. On what, then, are the hopes of those based who believe that the supply will increase in proportion with the demand? It has been calculated that a great quantity of old stuff is still lost, and that up to the present only one half the English families have sold their rags. Hence it is on the progress of domestic economy, as well as on the development of comfort and the manufacture of cheap linen and calico goods, that the calculations for a proper supply of rags for the ever growing wants of the paper-mills are founded. However correct these conjectures may be, it is certain that in the

present state of affairs rags are dear—dearer in Great Britain than all over the Continent, since native rags are insufficient for the consumption of the native mills, and foreign rags pay an export duty in the countries where they are collected. An English moralist, touched by the sad fate of these refuse articles, has even employed the argument of their value in order to *console* the rags, and, after all, what have they to complain of? They are in great request.*

Although foreign rags, especially those from the north of Europe, are generally superior to the English, they meet with formidable rivals in the old canvas obtained from the British marine. A Belgian manufacturer of paper, a few miles from Brussels, said to me one day, that he attributed the qualities of English paper — strength and thickness—to the quantity of old sail cloth employed in the composition of the pulp. This was going a great deal too far; for however large the English fleet may be, it could not suffice for the immense manufacture even of expensive paper; still it cannot be denied that ships supply a very valuable and important element to the vats of the British paper-mills. These ropes, which have been wet by the waters of every sea; these strong

* Since this passage was written, the anticipations of the paper-makers have been agreeably disappointed. The English rag market at the present moment is so glutted that we are supplying nearly the entire world.

and compactly woven sails, which have struggled against every wind, and have proceeded to discover distant lands; end by becoming books or newspapers—*tempestate acti, tempestatem quærunt.*

British trade has borrowed from nature the art of letting nothing be wasted. If we pay a visit to the immense cotton factories at Manchester, which toil for the entire world, we find there five sorts of refuse which are scattered about the looms, each of which has a distinct name. This refuse is carefully collected, not only through a love of cleanliness and respect for sanitary laws, but also, and before all, because it has been found to possess a value. There are dealers who buy all this, and it is estimated that there are about 50,000 tons of cotton waste annually produced in Great Britain. It is the same in the canvas factories; a portion of the refuse hemp or cotton is used to make coarse stuffs, the rest is sent to the paper-mills. The state of the waste or rags is, in fact, according to the language of English economists, one of transition. Nothing dies: everything changes. These rags, which have passed through a previous existence in another form, which have seen better days and gone through such varied conditions of life, await on the wharf, amid dust and obscurity, the hour of their industrial transformation. They have a new birth, for they are about to live again in the shape of paper.

CHAPTER X.

DARTFORD PAPER-MILLS—THE MANUFACTURE OF PAPER—THE DEVIL — THE WASHING MACHINES — THE BREAKING-IN ENGINE — FOOLSCAP — SKELETON DRESSERS — THE FINISHING HOUSE — WATERMARKS — COTTAGES OF THE WORKMEN—EFFECTS OF THE REMOVAL OF THE PAPER DUTY.

Two reasons took me to the little town of Dartford: I was curious to visit the paper-mills which the river turns in this part of Kent, and I desired to verify a fact referring to the history of the English paper trade. Tradition asserts that one of the first paper manufactories founded in England, was established at Dartford in 1588, by a German of the name of John Spielman. I say one of the first, for everything indicates that paper was made in Great Britain before this period: history even mentions a John Tate, who in 1490 had a mill near Stevenage, in Hertfordshire. The English who ask everything of Shakspere, have even asked him for information about the origin of the trade with which we are now engaged. William Shakspere in fact alludes, in his play of Henry the Sixth, to a paper-mill, which must have been built previous to Jack Cade's rebellion.

Is it to Tate's or Spielman's mill that the great dramatic poet intended a reference? Several writers have believed that it was the latter, because the rebellion broke out in the vicinity of Dartford; and as Shakspere, as a general rule, was not very scrupulous about dates, he was doubtless desirous of indicating an industrial attempt that flourished in his own time. However this may be, Tate's old mill has left but a very vague reminiscence, while Spielman's marks in a precise manner the infancy of paper manufacture in England. Queen Elizabeth, wishing to reward the services John Spielman had rendered Great Britain, conferred knighthood upon him. She also granted him a singular privilege, the sole licence of collecting all the rags of the kingdom for ten years. I asked myself whether the view of the locality would teach me anything about a man who had endowed England with a useful trade, and paved the way for her independence of foreign paper-mills.

Dartford, with its cattle market, its long street traversed by carts loaded with wheat or hops, and its old wealthy inns, at the doors of which the farmers' gigs stop, has certainly the character of a small English town, but of one situated in an agricultural district. Placed on the Gravesend road, Kent surrounds it like a garden, and crowns it with its chalk verdant hills. My first care was to ask the inhabitants whether any traces still existed of the old paper-mill founded in 1588. A winding road

was pointed out to me, which ran through meadows by the side of a small stream, at the end of which I should find the spot, which was the cradle of a trade now so widely extended in England. The stream, whose peaceful course I was following, was overshadowed by trees, some upright, others bending over the water, and was the Darent. It rises several miles off in Squirries Park, at the foot of the downs and on the Surrey border, whence it runs to Dartford through Farningham and a few other villages. Does not the destiny of English rivers resemble human life? At first feeble streams, they run indolently through the grass, and describe a thousand furtive windings, like children playing truant. They gradually grow and acquire strength, which trade seizes on: it is the age of youth; they have hitherto flowed for their own pleasure, henceforth they will flow for business. From this epoch they must impart movement to the mills and numerous factories of every description that collect on their banks. These small toiling streams have, however, at intervals, moments of rest. The Darent, at the spot where I saw it, was reposing; it was carelessly enjoying its siesta under a thick roof of verdure, reflecting, as in a dream, the crests of the trees that crossed each other on the surface, and seemed to be regaining its strength, which was soon again to be tried by a paper-mill.

As I went onwards, I heard the sound of a large wheel in motion beating the water, it was a factory

of stamped cloth, the owner of which told me that he had for a time believed he occupied the site of the paper-mill founded by John Spielman, but that one of his neighbours, the owner of a gunpowder mill, declared he had found, among his title deeds, the proof that the mill had stood on his land. Gunpowder mills are very numerous in these parts, hence the English are accustomed to say that the town of Dartford, as it produces gunpowder and paper, is better suited than any other to make cartridges. This manufactory, which I visited, though blackened with charcoal dust and impregnated with a strong smell of sulphur, is evidently quite modern. I was therefore enabled to convince myself that no trace of the first English paper-mill existed: but the situation assigned to this mill on the banks of the Darent, at a spot where the water is clear and rapid, appears to me extremely probable. On my return to Dartford, I asked the sexton for the keys of the old church, whose stones, worn by wind and rain, offer a ruinous appearance. Here, I found a far more authentic monument of Sir John Spielman's connection with Dartford: it was his tomb, and that of his wife. An inscription, in which his claims to English gratitude are briefly indicated, allows no doubt as to the truth of the historic tradition.

Close to the Dartford railway station, stand the buildings of an immense paper-mill, known by the name of the Phœnix. At its feet, I found the

Darent again, which here begins to change its name: it is now called Dartford Creek. The truth is, it is about to pass into a new phase of its existence. Hitherto it had not been navigable, but past this point it bears rather large boats, while running through the marshes to the Thames, into which it falls. Opposite the Phœnix, it expands into a calm and pretty lake. If I call attention to this small stream, it is because water courses are the soul of a paper-mill. Not only do they serve to convey the rags and turn the wheels, but they also exert an influence over the quality of the products. Kent has the reputation of manufacturing the best writing paper, and this is attributed to the purity of the water, which flows over a bed of sand and chalk. Elsewhere the streams too often contain particles of iron, which deposit brown spots on the immaculate whiteness of the sheets. The difficulty I found was to obtain admission to the manufactory. Since the treaty of commerce with France, and especially since the repeal of the paper duty, this trade has become excessively suspicious of foreigners. The English paper makers imagine that the French wish to steal their secrets. Foreseeing these obstacles, I asked to speak to the overseer. He was a man of about sixty years of age with an honest and intelligent face. He offered some difficulties, but he yielded almost immediately for two reasons: the first was that, as I lived in Kent, I was almost a neighbour,

the second, that I did not look as if I belonged to the paper trade. Having said this, he ordered his son to take me round. I had visited paper-mills already, especially in France and Belgium, and hence I was acquainted with most of the processes of this trade; but, at the first step I took inside the Phœnix, I was struck by a character of grandeur which only exists in the English paper-mills. This grandeur is visible in the buildings, the machines, and the distribution of labour. The power of the capital invested in every shape in this sort of factories defies and will for a long time defy foreign competition.

As I wished to commence at the fountain-head of paper making, we first entered a large room lighted by several windows, where girls were busy cutting rags in a dense cloud of smoke. Here I found again my old friends, which I had seen in such bad company in the rag and bottle shop, some days previously; they had been brought by water to the paper-mill. After all, the ragman was right, and rags have their dignity. You very soon notice this through the care with which they are treated in this new stage of their commercial destiny. They have already been separated into different piles, according to the quality of the paper to be made of them: but they are about to undergo a stricter sorting under the hands of the cutters. Each work-girl stands in front of a table, the surface of which consists of a coarse wire sieve, in

centre of which is fixed a sharp blade, a sort of short scythe, very slightly curved. Through this wire sieve pass the dust, pins and needles, and other matters unsuited for paper making. The steel blade, the back of which is to the work girl, serves to divide the rags, which the woman lays on the edge with her hands, at the risk of lopping off a finger, if she is awkward or careless. A good cutter ought to have special qualifications: she must remove the threads and destroy the seams which, if mixed up with the rags, would make spots on the paper; cut the rags into equal fragments, not exceeding four square inches, and arrange these fragments, according to quality, in the different compartments of a box placed on the work-girl's right hand. These women earn from three to thirteen shillings a-week. Most of them I saw were young, and some of them might have been considered good-looking, had not their dress been generally so neglected, and their hair so covered with dust. They reminded me, I know not why, of the olive trees in Province, whose foliage would be agreeable, were it not for the dense coating of dry and greyish dust that conceals it. This work is at the present day nearly all that is done by hand in the paper-mills: recently various machines have been invented to cut the rags, but hitherto these machines, though more or less successful, have not come into general use. It is, in fact, difficult to supply in this case the glance,

the choice, and the other qualities of human labour.

When the rags have been cut, they are thrown into a duster, a machine intended to clear them from dust, which also bears the name of the devil: doubtless because it moves about like a demon in a holy water vessel. I asked why they did not begin with this: for this first cleaning would save the work-girls a serious and unhealthy annoyance. The answer I received was that it would entail a loss of time, as a portion of the pieces was rejected by the cutters, and at the same time the machine acted better on rags that were already divided. From the duster the rags pass to the boiler, an enormous cauldron, full of boiling water and some alkaline matter. The object is to wash them, remove a portion of their colour, and (here I quote my guide's words) "kill the animal matter contained to some extent in them."

Up to this point the rags have performed their toilet—and I assure you they required it—but they have not yet lost their nature. They are now about to undergo a series of changes, after which we shall be unable to recognise them. Practical chemistry is a magician that transforms the substance and appearance of materials: the means, I allow, are more complicated than those of the fairy wand; but they attain the same result. The history of the metamorphoses of rags

begins at the washing-machines: this is the name given to long, immense stone troughs, which have something of the shape of an old Roman bath. These troughs are full of cold water, which enters by one opening and issues by another: so that it is incessantly renewed and always remains pure. In the middle of each trough is the cylinder or breaking-in engine, which answers two purposes: it washes the rags by beating and shaking them, but more especially it disorganises them. We must not say that it cuts them, although it is armed with steel blades; for by cutting it would injure the fibre of the linen or cotton; but it tears them to pieces. This machine is supposed to have been invented in Holland at the close of the last century, and it was a long time before it was introduced into England. One of its characteristics is activity; and by its aid as much as twelve tons of material for paper can be prepared in a week. It has, if I may so express myself, teeth and arms: with its teeth it rends; with its arms it incessantly agitates and stirs the rags which attempt to rest at the bottom of the trough. The result of these various movements is gradually to transform the rags into a species of pulp which floats on the surface of the running water. We can now form an idea of the nature of the chemical and mechanical agencies under which the old stuffs are about to pass. These varied agencies all combine for one object, and that is to destroy the primitive affi-

nities of the linen or cotton fibre, and make it contract fresh ones.

When the rags have been sufficiently washed, and, so to speak, ground in the vats, which takes about one hour and a-half, they descend in the shape of pulp to a lower room in the mill, where they occupy wooden cases or boxes. The next great business is to bleach the pulp, and for this purpose a solution of chloride of lime is employed. This operation requires to be effected with considerable intelligence, for excellent paper has been more than once disorganised and reduced to powder in the bleaching process. The effect of such a preparation is in truth surprising. My guide, a young man of twenty years of age, who was born in the factory, and knew all its secrets, showed me two handfuls of rag-pulp, one before, the other after, bleaching. There was the same difference between them as between mud and snow. And yet there are degrees in the bleaching, degrees which can only be perceived by comparison. The pulp he first showed me had been made of coloured rags: he then handed me another composed of cambric, and I was surprised at the praises I had bestowed on the whiteness of the former. He explained to me also, that of all shades red was the most difficult to obliterate by chemical reagents. We saw, in fact, in one of the boxes, masses of pulp which had been extracted from red rags, and which, in spite of bleaching, retained a

slight pinky tinge, most agreeable, however, to the eye.

The linen, or cotton fibre, which has now regained its robe of innocence, is once more washed in troughs, and more and more disengaged from the old bonds that retained it in the state of textile fabric. As this second treatment resembles that which the rags have already undergone in the first stone baths, it is unnecessary to dwell upon it. Let us pass on to another room, where we shall find an enormous vat, of the same shape and size as that which receives the porter in the English breweries. It is a reservoir in which the liquid pulp is deposited when it has attained the state of perfection. The colour of this liquid varies according to the nature of the paper it is proposed to make. It is most usually of the whiteness and thickness of cream, but at other times it has a slight blue tinge. If we may believe the traditions that hang about the paper-mills, the custom of blueing the pulp was originally produced by an accident. The custom dates back in England to the year 1746, and was introduced at a paper-mill belonging to a Mr. Burtenshaw. His wife was one day engaged in superintending a heavy wash, when by some accident she let the blue-bag fall into a quantity of paper-pulp, ready for use. What was Mrs. Burtenshaw's horror, when she saw the blue dissolve and rapidly become amalgamated with the liquid at

the bottom of the vat? She was so perplexed by the mischief she had done, that she was careful not to speak about it to her husband. The latter, however, was greatly surprised, and went about asking everybody the cause that had changed the colour of the pulp. As nothing can be wasted, he made of this blue pulp a paper, which was so liked, that it fetched four shillings a ream beyond the market price. Everybody congratulated the maker on his discovery. His wife, seeing the happy result of her accident, thereupon revealed the secret to Mr. Burtenshaw, and proved his right to a patent. The husband rewarded her by buying her a handsome scarlet cloak she had long desired. I am bound to say that the English, as a rule, do not colour any good paper. Colour with paper, as with ladies, is most frequently used to conceal the spots or defects of nature.

At the bottom of the vat are wooden drums, known by the name of agitators, which prevent the solid part from settling, and keep the entire mass in an equal state of fluidity. From this reservoir the blue or white liquid runs through a pipe that conveys it to the grand transformation scene, that is to say, the room in which is the machine which is to convert the rag-pulp into paper.

This machine, whose construction and details it would take too long to describe, has introduced a perfect revolution into the paper-mills. Before it, paper was made by hand; that is to say, moulds

were plunged into the vat, and when full, were covered with a piece of felt. These moulds were then suspended in the air like swings, and men standing at regular distances gave them a uniform movement, to render the pulp solid, by liberating it from the water it contained. Raising these moulds was in some cases a Herculean task. The largest paper still made by hand is called antiquarian: it is fifty-three inches long by thirty-one in width. Such was the weight of the quantity of pulp employed to form a single sheet, that it took nine men, with pulleys and other machines to draw the mould from the vat. Another great difficulty was drying the paper, especially in damp weather. At the present day, the machine does all this, and does it better; that is to say, with more precision, and especially with greater speed. Once in motion it accomplishes the work of eight days in eight minutes, and supplies the place of a considerable number of arms. We may say that it works entirely of itself, for it hardly requires to be watched by a workman or boy.

A glance at the whole mechanism will at once enable us to catch the three periods of the transformation of the pulp. At the beginning it is liquid rags, in the middle it is soft paper, at the end it is dry paper. Each of these periods may be easily followed at a single glance, and offers interesting details. The liquid that runs from the

vat reaches in a determined quantity one of the extremities of the machine, which receives it on a copper frame, whose fine and close texture has been compared to linen or a spider's web. A vibrating movement, or slight tremor imparted to this copper muslin, helps the fluid pulp in spreading evenly, like a white towel, and in separating from the water, which up to the present has saturated it. A suction pump also comes to the assistance of the moving sieve, partially exhausts the air, and causes the atmospheric pressure to act upon the liquid pulp, which is a true stream of milk, so as to thicken and consolidate it. From this period the pulp deserves the name of paper, and this paper must now be dried, but not too rapidly. The machine I saw at work at Dartford is much more complicated in its details than all those I had watched in Belgium. A portion of the improvement consists in the great quantity of rollers and drums, which allow the paper gradually to acquire the state of perfection.

Another advantage the new machine possesses over the old moulds is that of making paper of all dimensions. The width of the sheet is regulated at will by the thongs that travel with the liquid pulp, and restrain it like a stream between two banks. This width is at times eight feet, and as for the length, that is infinite. Two or three years ago, the English gazettes announced that there was in the Dublin Exhibition a sheet of paper long

enough to wrap round the globe. This must be a figure of rhetoric; but in 1851, curious persons admired at the London Exhibition two rolls of paper, one of which was 750, the other 2000 yards in length. The following anecdote is also told. An English paper maker, conversing with a friend, stated that his machine could produce a sheet of paper several miles in length. The friend gave an incredulous smile; but what was his surprise on receiving the next day a roll of paper which extended over a surface, some say of five, others of ten miles, and that too without the slightest tear!

We have seen the rags become paper. On leaving the machine it has to be sized, if it is writing paper, and, in any case, cut. This is also, to a great extent, the work of two other machines. We can uninterruptedly follow both processes in one of the departments of the factory.

In order to size the paper, it has to be dipped into a glutinous solution, and then again dried. Imagine, then, a roll of bluish paper eight hundred feet in length, destined to be called foolscap, and issuing from a vast tub, to pass through a series of revolving drums, which succeed one another. These drums, which the English call, owing to their lightness, skeleton drums, are enclosed in a sort of immensely long gallery, through which passes a current of air suited to the nature of the drying. At regular distances you can open doors and look into this inner gallery, and the sight

is a pretty one. This travelling sheet of paper, which rolls and unrolls round the drums, forms as it passes along graceful hangings, resembling bed curtains, of a pale blue, under which you might be inclined to seek a sleeping child or fairy. All this, however, has not been constructed, as may be guessed, to please the eye. The English makers thus give the paper time to dry slowly, and by an insensible gradation, for they have seen that such care produced a considerable influence on the quality of the production. When one end of this roll of moving paper, of which the other end is still immersed in the water, has reached the last drum, it is completely dry. It then descends to a lower room, where the cutting machine stands. In this machine the sheet of paper is first divided into three strips, then, toward the end, is detached into sheets which fall by threes, and are collected by lads of twelve years of age.

From this moment the paper is made, but, in order to embellish it, it is conveyed to what is called the "finishing-house." It is here, in fact, that it receives the final touches. The room we entered was occupied by girls, but at the first glance it was easy to notice a great difference between them and the rag-cutters we came across at the outset. The sorters, as they are called, belong to another class of females; their dress was careful and even elegant, especially for a small town; their manners had something distinguished about them,

and as they all worked bare-headed, it could be seen that they paid great attention to their hair. I am bound to add that their work is much more delicate than that of the rag-pickers, and demands great cleanliness on their part. Their task consists in examining the paper, and rejecting dirty or damaged sheets. Of course these rejections, and the cuttings scattered about the factory, are not lost. This faulty paper will be converted into good trade paper, by passing once again through the different evolutions I have indicated. The workwomen then sort the sheets into quires, and the quires into reams. Others are employed in glazing the paper by pressing it between metal plates. They earn from ten to eleven shillings a week.

In this room, it is possible to form an idea of English manufactures, for the Phœnix produces weekly twenty-four tons of white paper, nearly all of good quality. Without referring to the three grand divisions which are met with in all manufactories over the world—printing, writing, and packing paper—the English papers have many varieties in each sort, to which the most extraordinary names are here and there given. The origin of these names, which have greatly perplexed antiquarians, is found most frequently in the old trade marks. These marks, very improperly called water marks, were formerly impressed on the pulp by the mould, as they are now by one of the

rollers, known as the dandy roller. Still, instead of inscribing on the sheet the name of the paper-maker or seller, his sign was formerly engraved. Some of these old papers made an epoch, and have served as prototypes, either in form or quality, for sheets which are still made more or less on the same model. The primitive mark has disappeared with time, but the name to which this mark corresponded has remained. It is in this way that one of the splendid writing papers, foolscap, really bore originally the head of a court fool, with his traditional cap and bells. Another English paper, post paper, owes its name to a horn which was visible on holding up the paper to the light, because the old postmen were accustomed to carry with them a horn, which they blew to announce their arrival to the householders. Our expression, *une main de papier*, seems to have had no other origin, for we find among the old marks that of a celebrated paper, which was in use so far back as 1530, which the English—referring to the quality, not as we do to the quantity—still designate by the name of "hand paper." This mark represented an outstretched hand surmounted by a star. I will not say that the Phœnix produces every variety of English paper, for each manufactory has a speciality of its own, but it, at any rate, produces a very large number. When all this paper has been pressed, sorted, glazed, and cut, it is packed up and pressed once more under a machine of extra-

ordinary power. All that now remains is to send it to the wholesale paper dealers.

When we left the paper-mill the dinner bell was ringing. Three hundred workpeople, men, women and children flocked out like so many merry birds. As I was accompanied by an English gentleman and lady, the rumour spread that a benevolent society had sent a commission to make an inquiry into the condition of the working classes employed in the paper manufactories. We took advantage of an error which was none of our creating, to visit a few of the cottages. These cottages, especially those of the rag pickers and cutters, are nearly all situated in the poorest streets of Dartford. They are distinguished by a character of uniformity, and to some extent, by a family likeness. They are small houses, more or less old, consisting of the ground floor and one above, and composed of three rooms at the most. The work girls were taking a frugal meal on the ground floor, in some cases alone, but most frequently with their mothers. The interior of these houses is poorly furnished, but very clean and orderly. The rag cutters I questioned made no complaints: they declared, however, that they were very tired with standing all day: for that made their legs and their head ache. What annoyed them even more in the workshops, they said, was the dust: they also abused the London rags, which they were able at once to recognise by their uncleanliness. Though the

doors and windows are open, a March hurricane furiously blowing would not be sufficient to dissipate the cloud that is in the room; this ventilation moreover produces a current of air which is not without danger for health. Still I am bound to add that these girls are generally strong, fresh, and healthy. They possess two advantages that act against the unhealthy condition of their trade: first their youth, and next their country life. It must not be forgotten that paper-mills are nearly all built by the side of rivers, in sheltered and salubrious spots, in the midst of the most agreeable scenery; for water, dark foliage, and green lanes form the exquisite features of an English landscape. The education of these girls does not extend beyond that which is given gratuitously at the Sunday schools, where they learned to read the Bible. The lads employed in the paper mills are distinguished by a sound physical condition. Their complexion is less sunburnt than that of boys of their age who work in the fields: but their cheeks are richer in brilliant ruddy colours. Their education, like that of the girls, is sadly neglected.

Some owners of paper-mills have recently displayed a certain degree of solicitude about the moral development of the adolescents they employ, and two or three of them, to my knowledge, have even attached a school to their manufactory. Whence has the obstacle come? From the workmen. If the eldest of the children is a girl, she is left at

home to take care of the other children, while father and mother go to work at the mill from 6 or 7 A.M. till 7 or 8 P.M. If he be a boy, he is expected to hand over his week's wages on the Saturday, instead of wasting his time upon books. There is, however, some change in the opinion of the workmen: some of them are beginning no longer to regard the education of their children as a *hors d'œuvre*, and even make sacrifices to teach them to read and write. Their homes are also less neglected than they formerly were. Twenty years ago, no less than three inquests were held in one week touching the death of three children, two of whom were burnt and the third drowned itself, while the parents were working at a paper mill. Thank Heaven, at the present time few instances of such neglect or carelessness can be found in England.

The adult workmen employed in the Dartford paper mill generally appear satisfied with their condition: they merely complain of nocturnal work, for of course the steam engines rest neither night nor day. Men sometimes fall asleep when their turn arrives to spend the night in the shops, but they get over it by washing their eyes with cold water: on the next day a few hours' rest, or a walk along the river bank, when a fresh breeze blows, soon removes the headache.

In another trip which I made through Bucking-

hamshire to visit the paper mills, I learned that one of the workwomen had gone through some romantic adventures (that was the term employed). We found her in a room, where she was just going to drink tea: and, after a little hesitation, she blushingly told us her story. She belonged to a respectable farmer's family in the west of England. Having been deceived by a young man, when only seventeen years of age, and having thus lost her character, she had been compelled to leave her native village. Not knowing what to do for a livelihood, she set to work picking and cutting rags. It was a dirty fatiguing trade, to which she felt great repugnance, especially at the beginning. The other workgirls ridiculed her because she was always sad, and had received some amount of education. "I thought incessantly," she continued, "of the past, of my village, and before all of my mother, of whom I had heard no news for a year. One day, when I was busy sorting a pile of rags, my eyes were fixed on a piece of a dress whose colours and pattern were very familiar to me. I trembled from head to foot, and laid my hand on my heart, which beat fearfully, for I fancied I had recognised one of my mother's gowns, which she used to wear in-doors, and in whose folds I had hidden when a baby. You will tell me that there are many dresses in the world like one another. I said so to myself more than once: but no matter, a fearful foreboding had seized on my mind, the

more so because I was well aware that my mother never sold her cast-off dresses. I had saved a very small sum out of my weekly earnings, with which I started for my village, for I could not stay here any longer. It was not self-interest that made me act so: if my mother were dead, she must have cursed me as she left the world, and cut me off with a shilling. It was the necessity of removing a horrible doubt that crushed me. On reaching the village, I found that my mother was not dead, as I had feared, but she had been ailing ever since my departure. She kissed me, forgave me, and advised me to persevere with my work, for honest toil caused many an error to be pardoned. I nursed her for some weeks, but, as she was old and feeble, she gave back her soul to God. With the little money she left me I purchased mourning, and returned to a paper mill, but not as a rag picker and cutter—I am now a sorter: the work is clean and not fatiguing, and suits me better." Such was her story, which she accompanied with a few tears. In conclusion, the morality of the girls employed in the paper mills is very little superior to that of the English workwomen connected with other trades.

My readers will doubtless wish to know something about the paper mill owners. These constitute a very rich class or corporation. Some of them not only possess one or several mills, but have also a warehouse in London, which is most usually situated

in Cheapside or Cannon Street, in the vicinity of the Thames.* Most of them commenced with a large capital, which they have increased and turned over in their mills. More than one of them, however, has made his upward way from the workshop. Mr. W. Joynson, who was only originally a poor hand in a humble paper mill, possesses at the present day a paper mill at Mary's Cray, in Kent, where he has succeeded, by his personal efforts, in becoming one of the most respected and enterprising representatives of the trade. A branch of manufacture may well be proud of containing men of fortune and distinction, but it is especially honoured by producing men of merit. Among the latter was a Scotch paper maker of the name of Alexander Cowan, who died in 1859, at the age of 84. Although he had rendered his trade most prosperous, he altogether refused to be rich. In his house there was no luxury: all that was visible was a simple and abundant hospitality. He was accustomed to say to his daughters, "I hope that not one of you will be such a wretch as to marry for money." His family increased and multiplied like that of Abraham, for, prior to his death, he counted no less than one hundred descendants. To each of them he left a small sum, sufficient to start them in

* This does not appear to be a *sine quâ non.* Messrs. Spalding and Hodge, indubitably the greatest paper dealers in the world, whose transactions are reckoned not by thousands but by millions, find Drury Lane a very convenient place to carry on their enormous trade.

business, or render them useful to society by working. A great portion of the fortune which he accumulated in trade was employed in works of charity, and the advances he made enabled many young and meritorious men to force their way through the world. Twice he gave the sum of £800 to the poor of Edinburgh; but there is one action of his life which I, as a Frenchman, am bound to record. During the wars of the Empire, his mills, situated at Penicuick, were converted by the English Government into a depôt for French prisoners. Several of the latter died in exile and were buried near the mills, without any external mark to indicate their place of sepulture. A few years after the peace of 1815, Cowan returned into possession of his factories. One fine day he went to a fellow parishioner and obtained from him five shillings as a subscription towards raising a memorial to the Frenchmen. It was not that he wanted the five shillings, but he wished that his name should not figure alone in a good work. Then he had a neat stone monument erected, that bears the inscription: "Near this spot rest the mortal remains of three hundred and six prisoners of war, who died in the vicinity, between 1811 and 1814. Certain inhabitants of this parish, wishing to remember that all men are brothers, had this monument erected. *Grata quies patriæ, sed et omnis terra sepulchrum.*"

Among the English paper makers some are

purely and simply men of business, while others devote themselves to science, and strive to apply the resources of practical chemistry to new processes of manufacture. I will only refer to one class of experiments which has in more recent times greatly occupied inventors. Everybody agrees that rags are becoming scarce, that it takes a great many hands to collect them, that it is expensive to bring them to England from abroad, and people have asked themselves, whether it might not be possible to substitute some other substance. This question, however, is not a novel one. There is in the British Museum library a book, written in old Dutch, and bearing the date of 1772, which contains more than sixty specimens of paper made of different materials. The most curious fact is, that all these experiments were made by one man. On the other hand, for some time past wheat-straw has been ranked by the side of rags in some English paper mills. Must this innovation be regarded as a victory? In the first place, straw requires to be treated with great care, and prepared after a very sure method, otherwise the paper made from it would crumble to pieces; and next, the loss it undergoes during manufacture, and the amount of manual labour it requires, greatly reduce the advantage hoped to be obtained from it. Very decent paper, however, is made in England, of straw pulp mixed with linen or calico rags, but it is evident that up to the present the

former substance can only be regarded as an auxiliary.

Various other native substances, such as hay, potato haulms, Indian corn leaves, and the bark of several trees, have been employed by practical chemists with greater or less success. I witnessed in Belgium, in the mill of Messrs. Guilmot, ingenious attempts to make paper of sawdust;* but the enthusiastic manufacturers of England have specially turned their attention to exotic plants. Such researches, which may open a new field for trade, are assuredly most interesting, and I take a pleasure in enumerating some of them. About twenty years ago, Mr. John Murray, a Hull manufacturer, proved the value of the *phormium tenax*, or New Zealand flax, as a substitute for hemp in rope making; from the leaves of the same plant he produced a paper, certainly rather coarse, but remarkably strong. Another investigator, who has spent years in seeking means to improve the manufacture of paper, believed he

* The Society for the Encouragement of Art published in its Transactions for 1836, a great number of experiments made in this matter. The library of the same society possesses a book written in German by Mr. Schäffer, which contains very curious facts. One day Mr. Schäffer's overseer bought a rare bird, whose natural food consists of pine cones. The bird had scarce received its meal ere it was seen carefully tearing the cones piecemeal, so as to give them the form of a ball of tow, and it was only then that the bird ate it. Schäffer perceived that the substance thus prepared was suitable for paper making, and he therefore set to work in performing with mechanical appliances the delicate task the bird accomplished with its beak.

had found a substitute for rags in the fibre of certain Indian vegetable products, such as the banana and the aloe. Lastly, Mr. Brooman took out a patent in 1852 for making paper of a family of creeping plants, to which Linnæus gave the name of *mimosa scandens*, which are very abundant on the American islands, in Bengal, and on the African coast. Heaven forbid that I should try to discourage such laudable efforts, but truth compels me to say that these innovations have hitherto remained perfectly fruitless.

According to some English economists, equally costly researches and even bolder attempts have only been paralysed in Great Britain up to the present time by the exorbitant duty that weighed on the paper manufacture; now that the trade is free, it will speedily emerge from the rut, and be able to do without rags. I should like to share such hopes, but an objection checks me. One of two things must happen; either the new plants, which are expected to regenerate an old trade, will be grown in England, and occupy the place of usual and valuable cultivation in a country which, as it is, has not sufficient soil to nourish its own inhabitants; or else they will come from very remote islands, and in that case the expense of carriage will greatly reduce the saving it is anticipated will be realised on the raw material. I am, therefore, not surprised to find the positive-minded London paper makers considering this a

chimera. Old rags, in spite of all that may be said against them—and they certainly are not faultless—still hold, and will long hold, their ground in the mills against experiments to which, however, we wish every sort of prosperity.

A fact that surprised me on visiting the paper mills was the coldness—I might almost say, distrust and depression—with which the majority of the paper makers greeted the abolition of the duty. Is not this the first time that a trade has felt alarmed at no longer having to pay a heavy and vexatious tax? It was necessary for me to discover the reason of a dissatisfaction which seeks in vain to hide itself beneath an air of indifference. These reasons are easy to find. Hitherto, the trade we are engaged with has slumbered in Great Britain by the side of streams, in the shadow of the willow-trees and mills, contenting itself with making an excellent paper and realising a handsome profit. Complaints were muttered, it is true, about the exciseman, to whom fourteen guineas were paid on every ton of paper, and who took an inquisitive glance at the vats; but a known evil, to which a person is habituated, becomes hardly an evil; it is what is unknown that alarms. All at once this manufacture wakes up to perfect liberty; but if on one side the duty is removed, on the other the market is thrown open, and foreign competition menaces it.

During the discussion on this measure in the

House of Commons, a member mentioned twenty-five English newspaper owners who had already given up dealing with manufacturers of the United Kingdom, and sent their orders to Belgium or Germany. France, it may be easily supposed, will not remain behindhand, but will send its reams across the Channel. The English paper makers are afraid of foreign paper—not for its quality, but for its cheapness. France, Germany, and Belgium being, as they say, the home of rags, and labour being cheaper in those three countries than in England, they regard with some degree of anxiety the conditions of the struggle. According to their statement, they are quite willing to stand competition, if the bases of their trade were not so unfairly restricted by foreign laws and duties on rags. "Send us your paper," they say to the Continental makers, "but let us have rags at a reasonable price, and we shall not be the last to compete with you in every market of Europe."

On the other hand, the London publishers whom I consulted on this important subject consider, even in the present state of affairs, the apprehensions of the paper makers chimerical. In the first place, foreign paper will pay a customs duty nearly equal to that which English paper paid to the excise prior to the abolition of the duty; and in the next place, the Continental manufacturers cannot supply them with the paper they require. I have, it is true, to decide opinions which are still greatly

divided, but I ask myself, whether the manufacturers of English papers are not more afraid of a home, than a foreign, competition. The paper duty was a burden; the heavier that burden was, the more it placed a privilege in the hands of the rich paper mill owners. The proof of this is, that the number of manufacturers of this sort has rather diminished than increased in England during the last few years. At the present time, through the mere fact of the abolition of the duty, this monopoly is destroyed, and the paper making trade will soon erect its mills along the banks of the small English and Scotch streams. In Ireland especially, the island of verdure and rivers, this branch of manufacture may spread the fruits of labour over an indolent and unfortunate population.

We have seen how paper is made in Great Britain; each mill, moreover, fancies it possesses secrets of its own. I will not deny that there are detail processes which impart more or less value to the production of certain paper mills; but from what I have seen, the great secret of the English manufacture consists in the power of capital, the extensive use of machinery, the quality of the water, and, before all, the skill of the workmen. This secret it would be difficult to tear from the English.

We will now inquire what becomes of the quantity of paper that is annually produced by the mills of

the United Kingdom. One portion is exported, but the rest remains in the country, where it is turned to very various uses.* In order to form an idea of the home consumption, we will first proceed to the London Post Office, where we shall find paper again under a new form—written or printed.

* In 1859 the exportation amounted to 20,142,350 lbs. of paper, while the entire amount of manufactured paper on which duty was paid in the same year was 217,827,197 lbs. From these two amounts we can calculate the extent of the home consumption, to which must be added 2,037,693 lbs. imported from the continent.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GENERAL POST OFFICE—SIX O'CLOCK, P.M.—HISTORY OF THE POST OFFICE—THE MAIL COACH—RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE—THE POSTMAN—ROWLAND HILL—SMITH AND SON—"THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS"—"THE DAILY TELEGRAPH"—"THE SHOREDITCH OBSERVER"—NOVEL USES OF PAPER.

THE General Post Office, which is regarded as the centre of the whole postal network of the kingdom, stands in St. Martin's-le-Grand. It is a compact edifice, built of Portland stone, in a cold regular style, and has three porticoes supported by arches. The central portico, over which is a frieze bearing the name of George IV., leads by a flight of steps to a grand passage or hall, that runs through the whole width of the building, and opens into Foster Lane. In this passage are the boxes to receive the letters destined for the four cardinal points of the world, and behind these boxes are lofty windows, generally closed. I will, however, suppose that the time is a quarter to six P.M. The first window on the left hand, over which may be read "For newspapers only," is then wide open. An impetuous crowd, entering from

either end of the passage, fills the hall, and the letters fall like hail into the boxes; but it is the newspaper window which will principally attract our attention. The peristyle is blockaded by a band of porters and newspaper boys, lads of twelve or thirteen years of age, employed in the service of the papers. They run up perspiring and panting under bags full of papers, and jostle each other in spite of the efforts of the policemen, who try to maintain some degree of order in the midst of the confusion. Every moment the mob grows larger, for it is well known that the Post Office clock is faithful and pitiless. The journals, covered with a band, fly like a flock of pigeons round the window, hurled by a thousand hands. Sacks, packages, and baskets pour, as into an abyss, ream after ream of paper. All this falls pell-mell, thrown from the outside, and is caught in its flight, as it were, by the men inside: they empty the sacks and baskets, and then return them to their owners. It is hard work, and a policeman on duty told me that, a few years ago, before certain precautionary measures were taken, the officials had more than once had their eyes and faces blackened by the avalanche of newspapers hurled upon them. There is even a rumour that in the heat of action, a boy was one day thrown with the bundles, by mistake, into the office.

The clock begins striking six, the eagerness and thronging are redoubled, the newspapers still stream

in, but, at the last stroke, the window is sharply closed. "Too late!" one or two discontented laggards exclaim. Letters and papers, however, can still be sent off the same evening, the former by paying up to seven o'clock an extra penny stamp, the latter one halfpenny, as a fine inflicted for negligence. This exciting scene, called by the English the Newspaper Fair, ought especially to be seen on Friday and Monday, because these are the two days on which the weekly newspapers are sent off. For letters, the great day is Saturday, as the Post Office is closed on Sunday, and commercial houses generally devote Saturday to their correspondence.

The history of the London General Post Office—which was established in 1649, by an Act of Parliament—may be divided into three periods, represented by three gentlemen—Edmund Prideaux, Palmer, and Rowland Hill. Prideaux, who was appointed postmaster by the two Houses of Parliament, introduced, in the name of the State, some degree of system into a service which had been left before his time, more or less, in private hands. It was still the infancy of means of communication. The letter bags were carried all over England by mounted expresses, and in old small carts, which were constantly stopped by highwaymen. In spite of the inscription so frequently repeated on letters at that day, "Haste, haste, post haste," it seems that the post of that

period hastened slowly, for it did not exceed four or five miles an hour. This state of things dragged on till 1784, when a Mr. Palmer made a revolution in this branch of the public service by inventing the mail-coach.

Palmer had been owner of the Bath theatre, and as he had indubitably suffered from the slowness and want of faith of the couriers, he invented an entire system of reform, which he submitted, in 1782, to Mr. Pitt, the Minister. He asked leave to apply the system himself, saying that if he failed, he would claim nothing for his services, but, if he succeeded, he expected from the state two and a half per cent. on the net increase of the revenue. Pitt liked the scheme, but, to make sure, laid it before the Post Office, as he wished to have the opinion of special men. The following year the authorities of the Post Office gave their opinion in the shape of three large volumes of objections. They concluded by saying that the plan was entirely impracticable, but, in any case, it would prove prejudicial to trade and the revenue of the State. This check neither shook Palmer's firmness, nor even the protection of the minister. Pitt took the author of the scheme which had been so laboriously refuted to the Post Office, and supplied him with the means to surmount all the obstacles. A solemn meeting was held, at which Palmer found himself face to face with the Postmaster-General and the principal officials. He

triumphed over his opponents by offering substantial reasons, and it was decided that he should make trial of the new system. On August 2, 1784, the first mail coach started from London for Bristol. It was soon followed by several others, which proceeded by the high roads to different parts of the kingdom. The advantages of this new mode of transport for letters and newspapers were speedily appreciated; it greatly increased the average speed, discouraged sundry frauds, and augmented the resources of the treasury. From 1784 to 1839, the English postal system lived on the mail-coaches, and some improvements Palmer introduced into the administration. Some artists even at the present day regret, from a picturesque point of view, the loss of the mail-coaches—those heavy, sturdy machines, drawn by powerful English horses, panting along at the rate of nine miles an hour. In these mail-coaches, they say, were seen some of the traits of the Anglo-Saxon character—energy, perseverance, order, and intrepidity. What would you have? Everything has its day. The mail-coach had dethroned the express, and the railway post service was destined to dethrone the mail-coach.

The two systems lived side by side for some time, and the last mail-coaches saw the birth of the first railway carriages for the conveyance of letters and newspapers. During the last twenty years, the railway mail system has been gradually

developed in England, and it has now attained gigantic proportions. At night, when the line is free, and the buzz of business is lulled, this machine, a real travelling post-office, rushes past with a thundering sound, dragged by the snorting, whistling steam-horse. Inside, the large windowless vehicle is illumined by a row of lamps that diffuse a bright light. The whole length of this moving room is occupied by cases, the smaller ones being for the letters, and the larger ones in the centre for newspapers. We may easily suppose that the hands of the clerks do not remain idle, while the fiery dragon devours space at a rate of forty miles an hour. They are busy opening the bags, sorting the letters, and ranging them in boxes that bear the names of the towns the line passes through. At this time there is a rat-tat sound in the moving office, as firm and regular as that of thirty clocks ticking in the same room. The railway post-carriage does not do all the towns the honour of stopping at them; the exchange of letter bags is then effected by means of machinery. The conductor touches a spring, and a wide, substantial net, fastened to one of the sides of the carriage, at once falls; a moving iron arm comes into the carriage, seizes the leather bag, in which the letters ready for distribution are, and deposits it at the station door; at the same time the net catches another bag (sometimes several) containing the letters and newspapers for the towns along

the line. At times the train stops, but it is only at a point where several lines converge, and we consequently find ourselves in the midst of a heap of bags, packages, and bales, that cover the station platform. All this soon disappears, so hard do the men work, for here everything must be done to the moment, and the engine starts again, as if spurred by the demon of night, bearing with it fresh work for the post-office clerks.

About the same time as steam was destined to give wings to the post, other reforms of even greater moral range were introduced into the English legislature. In 1836, the stamp duty on newspapers was reduced from four-pence to one penny. It is unnecessary to dwell on the influence which this liberal measure exerted on the development of British newspapers. Not only was their number immensely increased, but simultaneously with this the circulation. At the present day the same newspaper often passes three or four times through the post office, as it is sent from one person to another, by virtue of an arrangement previously made among a small party of subscribers, and many Englishmen, who like to save time, have also a habit of sending, once or twice a month, some newspaper to a friend living at some distant spot. This means: "I am well and thinking about you." What more have we to say frequently in a long letter? This reform in the stamp duty was soon followed by another of an equally important nature.

About thirty years ago a traveller was going through the Lake district. He halted at the door of a small inn at the moment when the postman was also stopping to deliver a letter. A girl came out to receive it, turned it over and over in her hand, and then asked what the postage came to. The postman wanted a shilling, a very large sum for a poor girl such as this was. She gave a deep sigh, said that the letter came from her brother, but that she had no money, and consequently she returned the letter to the postman. The traveller was a man who went about to inform his mind and observe: as he was a good-hearted man, he offered to pay the postage, and, in spite of the girl's resistance, did so. The obstinate resistance, especially in such a case, had, however, caused him deep thought. The postman had scarce turned his back ere the young barmaid confessed that it was a trick agreed on between her brother and herself: a few hieroglyphics marked on the outside told her all she wanted to know, but the letter itself contained no writing. "We are both so poor," she added, "that we invented this manner of corresponding and franking our letters." The traveller went his way, and while admiring the Cumberland scenery, asked himself whether a fiscal system that gave rise to such wretched frauds must not be bad. The sun had not set ere Mr. Rowland Hill (for that was the traveller's name) formed the idea of organising the postal service on a new basis. He

said to himself that in England, where family affections are very powerful, but where the members are generally scattered—where the spirit of trade enterprise knows no bounds, and where the network of business relations becomes daily more ramified—the correspondence was only limited by the enormous postal charges: and that by removing this barrier, a great service would be rendered society without causing any loss to the treasury. His views were accepted by the English Government, and on January 10, 1840, the penny postage system began—that is to say, letters circulated throughout the whole extent of the British Isles for the sum of one penny. This bold innovation soon surpassed even the hopes of the legislators. Ten years' later, in 1850, the number of letters a week had increased from 1,500,000 to 7,239,962.

Mr. Rowland Hill, at the present day the Secretary of the Post Office, has introduced several other useful reforms, and rendered that service an admirable machine. Any one who sees the letters and papers piled up every night at the London Post Office, would be inclined to fancy that it would take a week's work only to get everything in readiness for a start. Well! two hours' later these masses of written or printed paper take their flight to all parts of the known world, being carried to the various railway stations in small red-painted carts. It is true that mechanism comes to the assistance of hands; a Jacob's ladder, that

extends through all the floors, is constantly engaged in ascending and descending, bearing with it men and packages. It is very curious to see the steps of this ladder appear at every moment, as if in an English pantomime. At first the feet of a man are visible at the ceiling, then his entire body is gradually displayed, until he disappears again beneath the boards, and is soon followed by another. Each step of this double staircase, which is animated by a rotatory movement, reaches the ground floor of the building in its turn, then moves a step forward, rests on the ground to give the men time to remove the sack it bears, and then proceeds of its own accord to another part of the ladder, when it ascends again.

All the newspapers, however, do not pass through the government offices at present. The real post-office for papers is in the hands of private managers. Any one who has resided any length of time in London must have noticed in the Strand, nearly facing St. Clement's Church, a palace which stands in the centre of the newspaper district. This great modern stone edifice, though already blackened by London smoke, is the establishment of Messrs. Smith and Son. Inside you discover an army of clerks and porters, engaged in sorting papers, and messengers. However this hive of labour should not be visited during the day, but at five o'clock in the morning. Old London is asleep; the Macadam of the streets, even that of

the Strand, is reposing in solemn silence : still the swarm of bees are already buzzing : papers that have just arrived wet from the machine are brought in in reams, and a file of light carts, resembling in shape those of the post-office, is awaiting the grand moment for departure. These carts are intended to convey the first impressions of the morning papers to the different railway stations, and it is important that they should not miss the early train. The papers are at times behindhand, owing to the late hour at which the debates in the House terminate : and in such cases the speed of the transport must make up for lost time.

The papers have hardly been divided into lots for the different stations, ere all these vehicles start off, and at not even the busiest portion of the day is the Strand disturbed by such thunder. The London papers thus reach the country even before the inhabitants of the capital have obtained their copies, and no extra charge is made for it. They are then sold and distributed in every town and village, by men, women and children. This is another branch of trade that employs thousands of hands. The same firm of Smith and Son has also established a circulating library, which lends out new books from one end of the kingdom to the other, through the keepers of the book-stalls which may now be found at almost every railway station.

It does not enter into the place of this sketch to write here the history of the English press : I only

occupy myself with papers in their relation to the paper trade. It has been calculated that the "Times" alone could every day cover with its editions a surface of more than thirty acres. A well-known weekly publication, "The Illustrated London News," on one occasion issued five hundred thousand double numbers, or a million sheets: this represents two thousand reams, weighing seventy tons. Several causes have in later years contributed to the prodigious growth of the number of English papers, and the first was the cheap revolution. The first publication that entered on this track was the "Penny Magazine." At a meeting for the advancement of social science, Lord Brougham alluded to the happy influence this journal had exerted over the education of the working classes. He mentioned in support of his opinion the story of a young artizan who, having taught himself to draw from the engravings in the "Penny Magazine," eventually became a distinguished artist. At the present day the illustrated penny press is legion: it flies each week in swarms all over England, and some of these papers—for instance, the "London Journal" and the "Family Herald"—have a circulation of from four to five hundred thousand copies. But it is not the miscellanies alone which have multiplied by coming within the range of small purses: the political papers attempted the same transformation three or four years ago. The paper which was the pioneer of the cheap press in London is

the "Daily Telegraph." A large paper of eight pages of very close text for a penny, seemed at the outset a daring novelty. Still the success was indubitable and is daily becoming more assured: a gigantic printing press, an astonishing machine, possessing marvellous strength and activity, is hardly sufficient at the present day to cover fast enough with black characters the yards of paper that succeed each other every moment in the printing office of the "Telegraph." The example was followed by the "Standard" and some other political journals. This movement has even carried away some of the old London papers, which have been obliged to knock down their financial basis and adopt the new system. Is it not true, however, that the cheap press has increased the number of subscribers rather than displaced them? Another measure which must indubitably give a great impulse to journalism and English publishers is the repeal of the paper duty.

In the meetings that prepared and gained this victory, the English orators laid great stress on the relations between paper and literature, the arts and the education of the masses. The saving which this repeal of the tax on intelligence will produce, will not fall into the treasury of the papers; some have been obliged to reduce their price, while others will introduce changes for the better in their size or editorship. The public will be the gainer in the long run. On the other side,

new periodicals at a low price will be established, and though fears might be entertained lest the great number of papers or periodicals might weaken the power of the press by dividing it, I do not believe that this danger need be apprehended in Great Britain.

A few years ago, upon the reduction of the postage on papers, certain writers predicted as a misfortune that each profession, each parish, each clique, would like to have its organ or its trumpet, They are not entirely mistaken, in the sense that the number of local newspapers has largely increased since that period. I lately came across a paper called the "Shoreditch Observer." Shoreditch is a district of London, and it is much the same as if the Rue St. Martin in Paris took it into its head to have its newspaper: but, after all, where is the harm? In a free and decentralised society like that of England, the infinitely little have a value quite as well as the infinitely great, and aspire to be represented. These pigmy journals, besides, in no way injure the great political journals, and not one of them will ever tear a stone down from the imposing edifice of the "Times." Publicity in every shape is one of the wants of English society. I have heard in other countries remarks made about a man who had been the victim of events: "Why on earth did he interfere in politics?" It is a reproach which would not be made in England, where everybody has the right

and the duty to take an interest in the affairs of the country.

With reference to the paper duty, writing paper has also been considered in its relations to the education of children and trade connections. It gives rise, in addition, to various trades; I will only allude to one, the manufacture of envelopes. Envelopes were at first made by hand: at the present day they issue by millions from certain machines, the most perfect of which is the one invented by Mr. Gathercole. I saw this at work in one of the London paper making establishments, where it was managed by two girls. The duty of one of them was to feed the machine, that is to say, slip in sheets of white paper of the proper shape and size. The machine did all the rest: it turned up the corners of the paper, folded them, and gummed and dried the envelope, dried it by means of an air-pump, and, when the entire job was finished, transmitted it to another work-girl, who picked up the envelopes one by one, and arranged them in packets. I was told that this machine manufactured on the average sixty envelopes a minute: but that in skilful hands this number could be raised to ninety or one hundred.

I should never finish were I to describe all the uses to which Englishmen have recently turned paper. They have made shirt collars, cuffs, waistcoats, hats, and bonnets of it. I was shown in Regent Street a paper dress, which for freshness,

elegance, and lustre, was in no way inferior to the most costly ball dress. Not satisfied with employing paper as a substitute for cloth, calico, silk, lace, and cutting it into rich laces and guipure, enthusiastic manufacturers already intend to make it the basis of many trade fortunes. According to them it can be converted into walking sticks, chests of drawers, tables, water-pipes, and ceilings of rooms, and I know not what else. To listen to them, the vat of the paper mills is the crucible of modern alchymy: everything goes into it and everything comes out of it. You may throw in grass, straw, bark, everything that never had or no longer possesses a value—and take out furniture and clothes; clothes to last a day, it is true, but of which the texture and fashion combined cost no more than washing a shirt. Is not this defying Ovid's "Metamorphoses"? Hence some economists of Great Britain declare that we are entering an age of paper, which, for valid reasons, the old mythology did not foresee.

The manufacture of paper, as we have seen, plays a great part in English trade and manners. From the hand that gathers the rags up to that which wrote "Ivanhoe" or "Childe Harold," there extends a chain of works, of mutual relations and services, which touches to some extent both ends of society. At the present day, however, this manufacture is passing through a critical pe[illegible] England. Throughout that country only

is heard, "Cheap paper!" Whether that paper comes from foreign countries or issues from English mills, it will be welcome. Still, this alternative is serious, and most deeply interesting to the future prosperity of the manufactures: for the Englishman is unwilling to accept a secondary position. When he does not reign in a trade he abandons it, and makes up his mind to accept the productions of foreigners. It is my opinion, though, that the British mills will not let themselves be defeated on their own ground: they will establish their trade on fresh bases, and lower their prices to place them on a level with the continental tariffs. A portion of the English paper will doubtless lose its quality, or, if I may be allowed the expression, its aristocracy. Under the empire of the Duty, the English mills only produced costly paper: under the *régime* of trade-liberty many of them will be obliged to make concessions to the economic demands of the consumer. Why should we feel aggrieved at this inevitable consequence? Cheap paper is the spread of instruction, it is the multiplication of books and papers, it is the light descending from on high on the obscure classes and the melancholy regions of handicraft toil.

Clubs, theatres, and newspapers refer to a style of life with which is connected in England another branch of manly recreations.

CHAPTER XII.

SPORTING LIFE—THE TURF—THE DERBY—THE ROAD—EPSOM TOWN—THE COURSE—ST. GEORGE'S BILL—TURFITES—THE BLUE RIBBON OF THE TURF—THE PADDOCK—THE START—KETTLEDRUM—BARON NICHOLSON—ASCOT—THE ST. LEGER.

THERE is a life about which little is known in France, and that is sporting life. Some members of the French Jockey Club will, perhaps, protest against this assertion, but in that case they do not know England—its races, which are national festivities, its hunting, its boat races on the Thames, its yacht matches, its athletic sports and exercises, and its army of pedestrians and pugilists. On this occasion I will confine myself to the turf. The English are passionately fond of horses, and make no attempt to conceal it. Races began among them at a very early date. So far back as the twelfth century there was a race-course at Smithfield, which was at the same time a horse-market. An eye-witness, Fitz-Stephen, has left us an animated picture of this infancy of the turf. He describes the emulation of the horses, the excitement among the spectators, and the ardour

of the jockeys, who urged on their steeds with whip, spur, and shouts. At a later date annual races were organised in different towns of England and Scotland. Most of the kings, beginning with James I., were energetic patrons of these national amusements. The period of the four Georges was the golden age of sport. Imitating the example set by the sovereigns, the English aristocracy took a frenzied interest in the new Isthmian games. They used, at that time, to proceed to the race-course in great state, in carriages drawn by six horses, and with an army of magnificently attired footmen. The grandeur and beauty of the sight soon attracted the entire population, which proved itself as enthusiastic as the aristocracy for the Hippic sport.

At the present day, what was originally an amusement and a spectacle, has become a science, a business, an institution. Speculation, instigated by brilliant chances of gain, has rushed at full speed into this new arena, where the uncertainty of the event imparts a gambling character to the wagers. Who can say, in fact, what slip may take place betwixt the cup and the lip in turf hopes? Regarded in its connection with the history of manners, a great curiosity is attached, if I am not mistaken, to a national practice, in which an enormous capital is daily risked, which finds work for so many brains, and which has created thoroughly peculiar traits in English society.

The objects of these chapters will be to give an idea of races, and especially of the Derby, which is to some extent a *résumé* of all the national festivals; to explain the life of the English horse and jockey, and to describe the large number of persons connected with the turf. The ground of our observations is marked out beforehand by the very nature of the subject; at Epsom we shall find the most celebrated race; at Newmarket the trades that live by horses; and at London, the home of that speculation known by the name of betting.

On May 28th, 1861, I was present at a meeting of the House of Commons when, towards the close of the evening, Lord Palmerston rose and proposed to adjourn the parliamentary session till the day after the next. "It is unnecessary," the Prime Minister added, "to enter into details, for I believe that the reasons for this adjournment are well known to honourable members." A laugh greeted these words, and for the moment there was only one opinion in the House, for Whigs and Tories understood that the Derby holiday was to be held. It is, in fact, a traditional law of the British Parliament that the members should be allowed a day's leave to witness the race. These races begin toward the end of May in each year, and last nearly a week, but the day of days is the Wednesday in Epsom week, which has assumed the name of the Derby Day, because this public festival was inaugurated in 1780, by the Earl of Derby,

grandfather of the present leader of the Conservatives. Why should we feel surprised at the British Parliament suspending its sitting, and deferring affairs of state till the morrow, when every interest, and the whole public attention are absorbed by the great pre-occupation of the turf? The American war, big with the cotton question, which so greatly interests English factories, may be on the point of breaking out, but who thinks of that? A week before the event, in drawing-rooms, taverns, omnibuses, and railway-carriages, you only hear one subject of conversation, who will be the winner? Day by day the excitement and curiosity are augmented. The Derby fever is communicated from the turf market to all classes of society. People bet furiously on horses they have never seen, and some of which will not even compete. In some London streets communication is interrupted by the crowd of men speculating on the races. Women, nay, the very children do not escape this malady, which is in the air. The boy proceeding to school with his books fastened with a leathern strap, may have forgotten to learn his lessons; but ask him the names of the favourites for the Derby, and he knows them by heart. This national festival has thus become in the course of time an institution that overpowers even affairs of state, that exerts the greatest influence over English manners, and annually destroys a great number of fortunes through the mania for gambling. It necessarily

engaged my attention, and hence, on the eve of the great day, I told an English friend of mine of my intention to go to Epsom on the morrow by railway. "Do not do anything of the sort," he exclaimed, "for you will lose in speed one half the pleasure. You can only do the Derby conscientiously by following the old high road. In the train you will have neither excitement nor dust, you will not be jeered by the boys or tossed on the angular roof of an omnibus at the risk of breaking your bones, and on your return you will not receive handfuls of flour in your face. Sooner than you should miss the sight of the road, I would like you not to go to the race at all." This argument convinced me, but the great difficulty then was to find a vehicle, for everything London possessed in the shape of a conveyance (and their number is not small) had been engaged a week beforehand for the Derby. My friend, however, told me that he could secure me a seat on an omnibus which had been hired by some city merchants. These parties are sometimes arranged a year beforehand. One of the members of the merry party undertakes to engage the carriage and provide the provisions; the expenses are divided at the end of the day, and each pays his share. The mercantile class being one that takes a lively interest in the Derby, this arrangement suited me in every way.

After half-past nine on the morning of the next

day (the hour fixed for the meeting) I was waiting at the end of London Bridge, for the omnibus which was to pass loaded with my companions. As it was behind its time I was enabled to observe the buzzing of the crowd, the thousand preparations for departure, the sale of nosegays which gentlemen presented to ladies after fastening a flower in their button-hole. The toilets, the animated faces, on which the expectation of pleasure was legible, and the stream of vehicles were beginning to mark out the road to Epsom. At length I saw an immense coach coming along drawn by four powerful grey horses. Our omnibus, which I at once recognised by the colour of the horses, had no other merits beyond solidity; it was a rolling house, of which the men occupied the roof, while the ladies were placed inside. There were two-and-twenty of us in all. Strength, moreover, is not a quality to be disdained in a vehicle which enters on the Epsom road upon a Derby day; it has often hard collisions to sustain, and in such a case it is better to be the iron kettle than the earthen pot. We started, but it was not till we came opposite the Elephant and Castle that the road offered a strange scene of tumult, movement, and confusion. Carriage struggled against carriage, driver against driver, with energy and skill. The circulation, momentarily impeded by the multitude of vehicles, was re-established, however, and the road became a stream of conveyances, moving

in three straight lines, which grew denser and more mingled from hour to hour. I saw them of every shape and suited to every fortune, from the four-horse open carriages, broughams, britschkas, gigs, dog-carts, hansoms, down to the omnibuses and even trucks drawn by a donkey. In most of these vehicles the most prominent object was an enormous square hamper which contained provisions, for the breeze of the Downs sharpens the appetite, and the Derby is, like Christmas, a feasting day. On all sides the freshest toilets were displayed. There is a race costume, which consists, for gentlemen, in a light coat, trousers and waistcoat of the same colour, polished boots, a white hat, and a green veil. This veil is intended to protect the face against the formidable cloud of dust which the movement of the wheels produces, and which extends in an undulating line for about eighteen miles. Some add a black leathern strap thrown over the shoulder, and bearing an immense double-barrelled opera glass. The dress of the ladies is principally remarkable through its lightness, delicate colours, and spring fabrics; a smart parasol, and a straw bonnet, or a sort of turban, known, through its shape, as a pork pie hat, and which is generally surmounted by a feather, are also indispensable. The very horses have a holiday appearance, for they are decorated with ribbons, cockades, and flowers. The further we proceed the more curious is the sight offered by

the road. Bare-footed lads run after the vehicles and turn somersaults to obtain a penny, bands of black performers rend the delicate ear with savage songs of joy, and as the English are fond of blending pleasure with utility, vans passed bearing flags covered with advertisements. Have you seen Blondin? these vans asked me more than once along the road. In going through Clapham, and other pretty villages, the elegant houses built on either side of the road offered us another interesting scene. The windows of the upper storeys, the balconies of the drawing-rooms, and the gardens gay with trees and flowers in front of the houses, were filled with women, children and old people, who followed the grand Derby procession with eyes of curiosity and perhaps of envy. From time to time girls saluted us by waving flags in their hands. These salutations, smiles, and looks of sympathy, under which a grain of malice was concealed, might be thus translated: "We wish you all sorts of amusement, but we should like to go to the races too."

About half-way our omnibus stopped to give the horses water. Need I add that the gentlemen were equally thirsty, and loudly expressed their desire to wash the dry dust down with a glass of ale? A public house on the side of the Epsom road on a Derby morning, offers a scene of confusion difficult of description. The landlord, the barmaids, and waiters did not know whom to

attend to first. There was a tumult of voices ordering refreshments, a clink of glasses and pewter pots, and an obstinate struggle between outstretched hands which seize anything drinkable. I was for another reason glad to get down. So long as you are moving with others you notice but little of the motion, but so soon as you stop, the rolling crowd of vehicles becomes, according to the English expression, an exciting scene. We got on the omnibus again at the end of a quarter of an hour, and the driver, thinking it advisable to avoid the carriages, whose number momentarily increased, left the high road for a while. On the new road our horses had entered we discovered a rather pretty English landscape: plains of a dark green colour, small streams, and clumps of trees under which oxen were ruminating. It was in vain, however, that our driver sought solitude; this side road, it is true, was less crowded than the other; but, as far as the eye could see, an uninterrupted line of carriages and horses wound in front and behind us. My attention not being so fully absorbed by the noise and agitation of the Epsom road, I began to form an acquaintance with my omnibus companions. All about them evidenced pleasure, for it is the Englishman's principle that it is impossible to be too gay or too free on such a day as this. They bowed mockingly to the girls who had resisted the temptation of the Derby, and were engaged in their daily avocations. An old worn-

out horse grazing on a heath, especially excited the good humour of our little party: they pointed to it, exclaiming, "There's Dundee!" Dundee was one of the horses going to start for the great Epsom prize, and thousands had been laid upon him. The poor animal shook its head, seeming to say, "What times we live in! neither old age nor past services are any longer respected!" then it turned its back on us and philosophically munched a patch of fresh grass. I was situated between two regular race-goers; both had not missed a Derby for more than thirty years: but they were drawn there by very different motives; one of them went to bet on the horses, while the other was an archæological student of racing. The latter had no other interest than seeing and comparing celebrated horses, and collecting facts old or new that related to this great English institution.

I made up my mind to profit as best I could by his information, but for the moment contented myself with resting my eyes, which were fatigued by the hurricane of dust and carriages, on the rich scenery of Surrey. Our omnibus bravely crossed private roads which were opened on that day for the sake of earning a few pence, for everybody speculates in his fashion on the Derby, and the smallest lanes become commercial roads.* Our

* Some English critics who have been kind enough to discuss my remarks, assert that they were toll gates. I have lived in England long enough to know from experience what toll gates

vehicle, however, was not at all adapted for these narrow lanes bordered with flowering horse-chestnut trees, and our hats were knocked off and our faces lashed by the branches. We laid this slight inconvenience at the gate of fortune, who likes to humiliate those who elevate themselves, and we maintained our position as best we could on the roof, by bending down before obstacles. After passing through some streets of a small town, we at length found ourselves on an immense open plain, where there were tents, gipsies, booths, old unharnessed horses, monkeys astride on dogs, boxers, and the whole mob of London. We were at Epsom.

The celebrity of Epsom is very ancient, and dates back far beyond the establishment of the Derby. Nearly two hundred and fifty years ago, people came here to drink the waters. Tradition ascribes the discovery of this spring to a man of the name of Henry Wickes. The summer heat had dried up all the ponds around, when he discovered in a field a small hole full of water, which he enlarged to let his cattle drink. The thirsty animals eagerly approached the mouth of the new well, but had scarce tasted the water, ere they displayed the greatest aversion. This circumstance astonished Wickes, who spoke of it to his neigh-

are, and I do not admire them ; but I declare that these were really private gates, opened by old women, who *asked for* but did not *insist* on payment.

bours, and they mentioned it again in their turn: the rumour soon reached the ears of the Faculty. The physicians soon discovered every sort of virtue in these waters, and patients arrived not only from all England, but also from France and Germany. About the year 1697, buildings and a ball-room surrounded the marvellous well, which was guarded by a brick wall, and visitors went to it along an elm tree walk. The reputation of the Epsom waters was maintained until 1706, when a London apothecary, of the name of Livingstone, bought land in the town, started a gambling-house, and opened another spring, which he called the new wells. He at first amassed a great deal of money, but unfortunately the new well possessed none of the virtues of the old ones, the sick derived no advantage for their health from it, and as public opinion is not apt to draw distinctions, both springs soon fell into the same discredit. Chemistry dealt the final blow to the Epsom waters, by selling them in powder or in salts. I obtained these details from my neighbour, the erudite turfman. He also informed me that these immense Epsom downs, which were beginning to expand before me, and on which the eighty-first Derby was about to be run, had been the scene of an historic event. On a May morning in 1648, a band of Royalists assembled here. The pretext for the meeting was a horse race, but in reality these gentlemen intended to concert measures for the restoration of

Charles I. The Parliamentary party got scent of what was going on, and sent Major Audeley, at the head of three squadrons of cavalry, to disperse the rebels or fight them. The Major, perceiving that the affair would be warm, and that he had better breathe his horses before commencing the action, took up his quarters on Red Hill. The Royalists took advantage of the armistice to retire. After avoiding and pursuing each other for several days, the enemies at length encountered between Nonsuch and Kingston, and the Royalists were routed after a brave defence. In spite of these historic reminiscences, and the ancient reputation of its waters, Epsom is at the present day a very small town, that slumbers in the most utter obscurity, and only wakes twice a year—in April for the Spring Meeting, and toward the end of May for the great Derby day. On that day Epsom is literally invaded, and all the provisions the humble shops of the town contain are as nothing, when divided among the innumerable crowd that covers the Downs from an early hour.

Our omnibus triumphantly entered a reserved space for carriages opposite the race-course, the admittance to which is one guinea. The horses were taken out and fastened to the wheels, and we got down all white with dust. Men around with brushes offered us their services, which were joyfully accepted. If the Derby lasted all the year, these men would be rich, if they only received a

few pence from each traveller. These thousands of interested services, which are repeated in every possible shape, explain up to a certain point the immense concourse of poor fellows who proceed to this party of pleasure. I am bound to say, though, that most of them are led to Epsom by the great attraction of the races, which exert a species of magic power over all classes of English society. It was nearly midday, and as the races will not begin for an hour, some parties thought it advisable to take their lunch. The small quantity of turf that had not disappeared beneath the crowd of men and vehicles was consequently covered with white table cloths. There are different *table d'hôtes*, or picnics, according to the degrees of fortune. All social conditions are, to some extent, exposed on this day; you are able to follow the progress of luxury, from the wooden-handled iron fork up to the embossed silver one. Most of the rich people lunch in the carriage, on which gold, silver, plate, old china, glass, in a word, all the artificial flowers of civilisation are displayed. Around these opulent tables Lazarus may be seen prowling with eyes of envy and the leanness of hunger. A great number of men, who have no trade or means of existence, proceed to Epsom to pick up the fragments, which are distributed with the liberality which the good humour of the day provokes.

Other parties of the middle classes do not stand

on such ceremony, the guests establish themselves as they best can about the omnibus, and care little about the nature of the table so long as the beer flows, and there is plenty to eat. They were out in the open air, too, and the ladies were delighted that they had not dressed themselves in vain, for the sun managed to shine, although the sky was covered with clouds. One of our party told me that they were going to have a sweep. What is a sweep? I had not the remotest idea. Numbers were written on small pieces of paper, which were placed in a hat, and each of us, after paying half-a-crown, drew one of the numbers. My attention was soon diverted from this lottery by the arrival of my neighbour, the betting man, who had gone away for a moment to pick up the turf news, and now returned with a gloomy face. "Well," he exclaimed, addressing me, "it seems that the favourite has passed a bad night."—"You mean, I presume," I replied, "that Dundee has not slept, or else that he is ill?"—"You do not at all understand the language of the turf."—I confessed my ignorance. "I mean that he has greatly gone down in the betting since yesterday,"—"How does that affect you?"—"This far, that I shall lose two hundred pounds if he does not come in first; but these fluctuations of the market do not disturb me; all these rumours produce no more effect on me than does the wind sweeping over the downs. I am ready to back him, if you like to lay the

odds against him." I declined the proposal, but was beginning to understand the anxiety of the majority of the persons present on the course.

The betting man also brought other news, which interested me the more, because it threw a light on that mystery to which the English have given the name of sporting life. For the first time I learned that the maladies of race-horses were kept as secret as those of kings and sultans. One of the heroes of the day, an Irish horse called Bombardier, had been placed *hors de combat* for many a week past by an accident that had happened to his leg. So great, however, are the silence and discretion that prevail in the English stables on such occasions, that no outsider suspected what had happened. People continued to back Bombardier throughout England, and his owner did not hear the sad news till he arrived at Epsom. These horses, being great powers, have also to undergo the inconveniences of greatness; attempts are made on their life. One of them had been attacked on the previous night in his stable by men, who tried to remove the ventilator, but who, stopped in their nefarious scheme by the watchmen, nimbly took to flight. The noble animal was, in fact, watched by two body-guards, who never quitted it day or night, and by a policeman. "I have known the time," the betting man told me, "when the trainers were obliged to sleep in the boxes by the side of their horses, with a bottle of

brandy and a brace of pistols. Some of them, in order to guard against poisonous drugs, used to place live fish in the water the favourite was to drink. Even at the present day, many trainers taste the water before giving it to the horses, in the same way as the stewards do at the table of Indian kings."

In the meanwhile, a certain agitation in the crowd announced that the first race was about to be run. This time I addressed my antiquarian neighbour, in order to obtain information as to the character of this race. I learned that the prize was a silver plate, offered to the winner by the town of Epsom, and valued at fifty pounds. "In the infancy of racing," my kind neighbour added, "the prize was a trifle at Chester, where this amusement is very ancient. The company of saddlers formerly presented the winner with a woollen ball, decorated with flowers and fixed on the point of a lance. In 1540, a silver bell, known by the name of St. George's Bell, was substituted for this trophy. In the reign of Charles II., a silver racing cup was given in lieu of this bell. It was not until the reign of George I. that the first silver plate was won by Black Hambledon. Prizes of this description are now-a-days very common; but in proportion as humanity grows older, it becomes wiser, that is to say, more self-interested. Very positive rewards are now required to stimulate competition, and silver plates or purses of

100*l.* are regarded as of but little value, when compared with the new system of stakes. Hence the race now about to be run will only be regarded as the preface to the day." I still had to learn what the system of stakes was, but as everybody was anxious to get a good place to see the first race, I deferred my questions.

All our party, male and female, had mounted on the roof of the omnibus; and from this height I was for a moment stunned by the sight of the multitude. Epsom downs extend for an enormous distance, undulating with an almost insensible and graceful curve: well, on all sides there was not a blade of grass which was not covered by the crowds. This ocean of heads, or to speak more correctly, of hats, for the English only uncover in the last extremity, had something imposing and really solemn in its stirring and restless immobility. Before us stretched out the race course, which the policemen were striving to clear by thrusting back the promenaders who had invaded it; and on the other side rose a black compact mass of carriages, on which pyramids of gazers were built up. The race course is of a horse shoe shape. I heard sportsmen complaining of the state of the ground, which they said was as hard as diamonds; but this information did not greatly affect the ladies, who generally like to hear the horses' hoofs rattling on the hard, dry ground. As I had been told that the first race was not the great event of the

day, I paid less attention to the spectacle itself than to the spectators. There is one solemn moment for the man who can observe coolly—it is that when the horses pass like arrows through the double row of gazers lining the course: you then see all the faces turn in front of you, from right to left, to follow the progress of the race. This enormous pantomime, this pendulum movement repeated by three or four hundred thousand heads amid a religious silence, has really an extraordinary effect.

The race was over. I had entirely forgotten the piece of paper I had drawn from the hat, and which I had been recommended to keep carefully in my waistcoat pocket, when one of our party shouted to me, "You have won!" "What?" I asked him in great surprise. "Three sovereigns"—"How so?" "*Your* horse has come in first." As I was not aware that I possessed horses, I was obliged to believe that it was one of those which had run. "Have you not No. 6?" It was really the number inscribed on my paper. I began to understand the nature of a sweep. Numbers are written on pieces of paper corresponding with those placed against the names of the horses on the race card: the man who draws the winner sweeps off the stakes of the other members. This form of wager is one of the most innocent, and real turfites despise it as a sport for children or chimney sweeps. In fact it requires no mental calculation, and I was

compelled to confess that I had won more by good luck than good management. There are some sweeps, however, which are not contemptible. A few days previously a Derby sweep had been drawn at White's Club, according to annual custom, and Lord Stamford had been so fortunate as to draw Dundee. The club consists of 1200 members, each of whom pays ten pounds: his lordship, therefore, was about to win 12,000*l.*, if, as everything led to suppose, Dundee gained the prize in the famous race that was about to come off, and which absorbed universal attention.

Up to this point I had seen the middle-class side of the festival, and I had still to see the grand side. For this purpose I must change the scene. I took advantage of the interval between the two races to leave Carriage Hill and proceed to the Grand Stand. What is the Grand Stand? At a distance you would be inclined to call it a building of human heads, for the architectural outline is so hidden by thousands of spectators. Closer at hand it is an immense opera box so built as to command the whole of the course. This slight building stood out against the blue sky like a section of the Crystal Palace transported during the night to Epsom by the genius of speculation. The turf magnates assemble here in galleries and boxes covered with rich scarlet hangings. A private enclosure, known by the name of the betting ring, the magic ring, and also

as "Mammon's acre," was occupied by the vast fraternity of betting-men and book-makers. The latter, in fact, had each a pencil and a pocket-book in his hands: but the book in which they were writing had no connexion with literature, they contented themselves with entering the odds they took or laid. It was a Babel of shouts almost unintelligible to profane ears; a confusion, and a tumultuous crowd in which it was impossible to move or breathe. All I understood—for I was not yet initiated in their language—was, that these men, to use the expression of an Englishman, were trying all they knew to thrust horses that had no chance of winning down the throats of their customers. I asked myself what magical power this ring could possess, but was soon compelled to acknowledge the justice of the epithet: the sight of the gold sparkling and passing from hand to hand, and the sound of the crumpled bank-notes which flutter like a flock of birds, in truth exercise a species of enchantment. Many spectators who had intended to remain indifferent, gradually grow excited, and eventually risk enormous sums. The fever or intoxication of Mammon even spreads beyond the limits of the ring: many honest gentlemen open their purses under the influence of hearing the name of some horses mingled with the seductive rattling of sovereigns. As forming a curious contrast to the feverish agitation of the betting ring, it was curious to watch in the galleries of the Grand Stand the

turfmen belonging to the higher classes. The latter had made all their bets long previously, and many of them had heavy sums at stake; but they affected that air of haughty calmness and indifference which well-born Englishmen regard in critical moments as a proof of education and moral strength. As for the ladies, they appeared more anxious to display their toilets and beauty, than to reflect on the gambling chances of the day. It was the Derby in a festal garb. Some of them had backed horses, but did not trouble themselves about it, for they knew who would have to settle their bets.

I was now curious to follow the preparations for the great race, on which all the interest of the crowd was fixed, and which confers on the winner the blue ribbon of the turf. No jockey who mounts one of the competitors for the Derby must weigh more than eight stone and a half. Under the Grand Stand there is a cellar of rather melancholy appearance, bearing the name of the weighing-room. Here assemble the jockeys, an extraordinary race of figures, light as feathers, muscular as athletes, who might be taken at the first glance for boys, but whose tanned faces frequently announce a very decrepit youth. They arrive booted, and covered by a long brown great-coat, in a sort of chrysalis state, from which they will speedily emerge in silken jackets and bright colours. One after another they sit down with an air of gravity in

a chair that forms one of the scales of the balance. Some of them are fabulously light: there are English jockeys who only weigh three or four stone; the difference between their natural and their racing weight is in such cases made up with a piece of lead contained under the saddle.

In the meantime the bell had rung, and it was time to saddle the horses. A number of curious persons rushed to the paddock to witness the ceremony of saddling, and I followed them. This final toilet of the horses chiefly consists in stripping them: the clothing is removed from their back and loins. It reminded me of the remark of the English lady's maid who, alluding to her mistress's very low-necked dresses, said one day: "I am going to undress my lady, so that she may go to the opera." All the horses that compete for the Derby must not be more than three years old; and, consequently, they are in all the flower of their beauty. At the sight of these noble creatures the enthusiasm broke out. Where is Dundee? His proud and intrepid appearance and his bold glance produced shouts. I am forced to say that the opinions formed at such a moment about the actors of the day are guided by self-interest: everybody sees his horse through the amount of money he has put on him, as through spectacles. Now, Dundee being the favourite for the Derby, that is to say, the horse on which most money was laid, he was naturally most

admired. People hardly deigned to notice the triumphant modesty of Kettledrum or the impatient ardour of Diophantus, who almost threw his jockey. For my part, as I looked on with disinterested eyes, I did not at once share the admiration of the English for these race-horses. In spite of their delicate lines, their pretty light heads, their thin flanks, their oblique shoulders, and their necks, on which the veins were designed like the fibres of a vine-leaf, these horses did not represent the beau ideal of their race, such as I had seen it in Greek and Roman sculptures. An amateur to whom I ventured to express my doubts contented himself with shrugging his shoulders. Another who was more indulgent, or better bred, took the trouble of explaining to me that the beauty of horses, like that of all living creatures, was in a ratio to the nature of the services expected from them. These horses possess racing beauty—they are the birds of their race—they do not even run, but fly. With their smooth coats, shining like satin, their plaited manes, like the hair of English maidens, and their particoloured jockeys on their backs, these horses proceeded down the course to the starting-post. As soon as they appeared at the post, at the sight of these creatures in flesh and bone, which had up to the present only been myths floating in the dreams and imagination of the crowd, the betting fever broke out again with frenzied ardour. The vast surface of Epsom Downs was one

immense gambling board on which gold pieces showered down. Proud of bearing the fortunes of several thousand men, the horses arrived with more or less docility at the post whence they would begin the struggle.

The race-course had been cleared, when a dog, taking advantage of the circumstance, began running down it at full speed, amid a thunder of ironical applause. It is curious to notice to what an extent the slightest incidents that would pass unnoticed by a small body of persons, arouse the interest and clamour of an immense crowd, already excited by the most violent emotions. One of my neighbours said to me, "I know that dog: it has a mania for notoriety. It plays the same trick every Derby day, and I must confess that it has succeeded in making itself talked about, for its exploits are invariably recounted by all the English papers that describe the race." This dog, indeed, enjoys an incontestable notoriety in the racing world.

The starting-post was now the object of general curiosity. It is no slight task to arrange this important matter properly: the starter must possess energy, patience, and a sure glance; for amid these intractable racers some escape like an arrow from the hand that tries to restrain them, while others rear and refuse to get into line. When they are at length arranged in one line, about two hundred yards from the post, the starter plants in

the ground the large staff of two colours he holds in his hand, and shouts in a loud voice, "Go!" At the same moment the red flag, which is near the post, is lowered; it is on this flag the jockeys keep their eyes specially fixed. "They are off! they are off!" such was the cry that immediately ran along the Downs, *alea jacta est.* The turf palpitates—it is alive—for the horses seem so thoroughly to form part of the space they are devouring. These sons of the wind, mounted by butterflies glistening with silk and gold, proceed for three-quarters of a mile in a straight line, and then gradually describe a curve, which eventually takes them out of sight. They are lost for a few seconds behind the tents, huts, and houses on wheels, which crown the crest of a hill. This moment is an age—a moment of uncertainty—a terrible moment for the gamblers, for whom, as in the ancient tragedies, the most pathetic scene takes place out of sight. The deep silence can only be compared to the size of the crowd; but this silence conceals internal tempests. Again, the interest of the Derby is not confined to the mere course where it is run, or to the cloud-capped hills that close in the view. All England is at Epsom in heart and thought—the breeze of the Downs bears the great news far away, and one half of London has already learned by telegraph that the horses have started. They have disappeared, but will return to sight. Here they come! neck and neck, head and head,

nostrils against nostrils—they furiously contend for victory. The scene is too exciting, and shouts burst forth again, "Bravo! Dundee wins!—no, it is Kettledrum!" The names of the two horses in front fly along, and are mingled with the shouts and applause till they have reached the winning post, facing which is the judge's box. An excited crowd then rush from all directions, leap over the chains that mark the course—a machine, that in the distance bears some resemblance to a scaffold, has already hoisted the number of the winner. It is Kettledrum!

This news was at first received by an immense movement of surprise; for Kettledrum, who had gained the victory, had been regarded prior to the race by the majority of the turfmen as anything but a formidable adversary. I saw the betting man of our party return with a very downcast face. "Well," he exclaimed, "the wrong horse has won." I understood that the horse was wrong in the sense that he had forgotten to back him. He soon recovered from his emotion, however, and added, "After all, I can console myself; *my* horse came in second, and would have been first, had he not broken down." Surprise soon made room for enthusiasm. Shouts after shouts broke out in honour of Kettledrum. The victor was frenziedly applauded, even by those who had lost through him, and who, a quarter of an hour earlier, would not have risked a shilling on him. What a

thing success is, after all! A horse that wins the Derby, even though he stood very low in the betting before the race, all at once becomes a celebrity, a power, an object of veneration, and a gold mine for his owner. In the first place, he receives a good part of the stakes, which, in 1861, amounted to 6225*l.* This sum is as nothing compared with the extent and importance of the engagements the winner of the Derby has for other races of the year. His reputation alone is a capital. All the English newspapers carefully publish his genealogy, his history, and the names of his owner, trainer, and jockey. His portrait (I mean the horse's) is engraved, photographed, and painted in oil by the first artists. His portrait takes an honourable place in the drawing-room of turfmen, in the offices of sporting papers, in clubs, and even in certain taverns, where it forms a pendant to the picture of Wellington. His glory is discounted in bank-notes in all the betting rings of England, and he is sure in future to be a favourite in all the races he is entered for.

My eye then turned to the multitude that covered Epsom Downs: it was a moving sight. Flocks of pigeons thrown into the air were describing circles above the ocean of heads, and after recognising their road, darted in all directions, bearing under their wing the name of the winning horse. These innocent messengers, it is said, have been at times employed for illicit purposes: they have communicated to certain bettors the news of

the day at a moment when the betting was still going on furiously, as the result was not yet known in certain betting-rooms. At the same moment all hands are engaged in unfastening the hampers, a formidable explosion of champagne corks rends the air on all sides, and blends with the fluttering of the wings.

Two questions have greatly occupied Englishmen, and have remained unanswered to the present day—whence comes all the money lost and all the wine drunk at Epsom on a Derby Day? Some sporting men have estimated that nearly a million of pounds changed hands on that day in consequence of the betting transactions. As for the number of bottles of wine, they have never been calculated, and never will be. The more or less genuine champagne sparkles, beads and foams in all the glasses: this foam is the symbol of the fortune of the day—it rises and overflows; and what remains behind? Among the visitors, some drink to celebrate their victory; others to console themselves for their defeat. No external sign betrays on the faces the horrible anxiety about the future, and the gloomy dis-illusions that follow every race! What castles in the air have faded away! and yet nothing shows it. The Englishman never defers serious business till to-morrow; but he often likes to put off his ill-temper till then. Those who had lost their money had not on that account lost their appetite; they attacked with even greater fury the pigeon-

pies and pyramids of cold meat each party had brought with them. People could be seen eating in the open air, in booths, in the Grand Stand—everywhere. In the Grand Stand, the magnificent refreshments displayed all the wealth of the English culinary art. Here were associated the patrons of the turf, members of the English aristocracy, and even foreign princes. I recognised there the Duke of Cambridge, the Comte de Flandre, and the Duc de Chartres.

My neighbour on the omnibus, the chronicler of the turf, was of the opinion that this Derby was one of the most lively, merry, and noisy he had ever witnessed. "Two faces are absent, however," he said, "which gave relief to the scene; they are those of Jerry and Baron Nicholson. You knew Nicholson, who every evening caricatured the Lord Chief Justice at the Cyder Cellars. He used to have here, during the races, a refreshment booth. His daughter, Miss Nicholson, to whom he left no other fortune, succeeds him this year, and tries to sustain the reputation of the booth; but who will restore to the visitors of the Derby the large stomach, the triple chin, the merry, sarcastic face, the jests, and good temper of the poor Baron? You cannot have known Jerry; he was an original, who affected the airs of a ruined gentleman. He wore a coat in the latest fashion, though most usually torn, a three-cornered hat, and an eye-glass. Thanks to the

licence of the Derby, he went up to the carriages of the aristocracy and familiarly entered into conversation with them. His grammar might be doubtful, but, for all that, he spoke with fashionable ease. As he knew all the members of the English nobility, he was frequently intrusted with a message for Lord A—— or Lady B——. After paying his respects, he would hold out his hand for half-a-crown, make a profound and majestic bow, and then withdraw." The words "licence of the Derby" may perhaps need explanation. The Derby Day is the only one in the year on which England practises a species of *entente cordiale* between all classes of society. On this account, and justly so, the name of the British Saturnalia has been given to it. The interest in the race which everybody shares to the same degree, establishes a connecting link between the great and small. On this day a lord bets with his tenant on a footing of equality, and the duchess is willing to let it be believed that she is composed of flesh and bone, like the plump citizen's wife, who spreads out her flounces in her carriage, and with whom her Grace at times exchanges a smile. English etiquette, so imperious at other times, suddenly loses its strictness. I will only quote one instance: a carriage full of females was standing in our enclosure; these women, who at the outset behaved with some degree of modesty, gradually let the mask fall, smoked cigars, and

became intoxicated with champagne. An Englishman of respectable character—but who had been a great traveller, and that was doubtless his excuse—ventured to enter the carriage for a moment, and exchange some jests with them. He was reproved for his conduct, but entrenched himself behind the licence of the Derby.

A last race, that of the Burgh stakes, closed the day's sports. It was six in the evening; the crowd was beginning to depart, and the grass was gradually becoming visible again on Epsom Downs. This is the moment when the gypsies prowl about, and old women rummage every blade of grass, to pick up the relics of the feast, at times even the money which has slipped through the hands of the bettors. Our omnibus started for London. On leaving the race-course, we were attacked by a shower of oranges; some of my companions began to grow angry, but the old turfman told them that, in former times, he had been pelted with stones; hence we had only to thank our fortunate stars. In the open carriages, which, like ours, were seeking their road through the triple file of carriages, many gentlemen wore wooden dolls in their hats. I was told at first that it was a sign that they were winners; but as in this way there would have been more winners than bettors, I concluded that many decorated themselves with this trophy to conceal their defeat. The number of wooden dolls sold on this day is

incalculable. After rolling along a long road encumbered with every sort of vehicle, and stopping several times to quench thirst, our omnibus at length rattled over the stones of London Bridge. What most strikes the foreigner, in going to and returning from Epsom, is the absence, or at least apparent absence, of all authority. The police do not interfere except in extreme cases, and then only to arrest thieves or protect individuals. Elsewhere Government teaches the people how they should amuse themselves; the Englishman likes to enjoy himself in his own way and with plenty of elbow room.

Such is the Derby; a strange, unique festival, the free manifestation of a free people, with which none of our French festivals are comparable. We have, it is true, our Longchamps and our Mardi-gras, without reckoning the races at Chantilly and the Bois de Boulogne. Well, the Derby is at once a display of fashion, a carnival, and a race-course. The English, however, call our Chantilly races, *courses à la Watteau;* and it must be allowed that there is as much difference between the latter and a Derby as between a rustic festival of Watteau and Rubens's famous Kirmesse. Then again—and it is in this especially that the practical character of the English is recognised—business is connected on that day in England with the attraction of pleasure. Beneath the festival of Longchamps there is only frivolity, beneath

the Mardi-gras there is only folly, while beneath the Derby there is a serious idea—the improvement of the breed of the horse, which the English regard as the crown of the animal kingdom.

I have entered into a fuller description of the Derby, because, from more than one point of view, this race is a *résumé* of all the rest; there is, however, a great number of celebrated meetings whose character I must indicate in a few lines. In the same week the Oaks are run for at Epsom, so called from the name of an estate the Earl of Derby possessed in the neighbourhood. This is the ladies' day. The great prize is contested by three-year-old fillies, and before the races the ladies bet dozens of gloves with incredible ardour. Next come Ascot races, which belong to the aristocracy. Formerly the reigning sovereign went to Ascot in state, and the ladies of the Court promenaded the course between the races. In some years the Queen has also been present. These races, which are visited by the choicest company, have at once the elegance of an open-air opera, the gaiety of a fair, and the interest of sport. Along a deep row of carriages you notice splendid toilettes, forests of feathers, and silk dresses costing twenty to thirty pounds, which are faded like a flower before the close of the day by the dust and sun. Formerly the Emperor of Russia gave a silver cup to the winner of one of the races at Ascot; but politics

exert an influence over the history of the turf, and when the Crimean war disturbed the friendly relations between the two countries, another cup was substituted which had no connection with St. Petersburg. This fashionable festival is also celebrated for another curious circumstance—at least half the village lads and girls in the neighbourhood get married in the week before the races, and one of the most delicate attentions the new husband can show his wife is to take her to the races. This attraction is so irresistible, that it has more than once overcome the heart-doubts of girls. The first of August is also a great day in the racing calendar, for it is the great day of Goodwood, the cup-day which so eminently excites the ambition of turfmen. If anything would reconcile a foreigner, and especially a child of the French Revolution, to the law of entail, it would be the magnificent park of the Duke of Richmond, one of the hills in which commands the race-course, and runs for an enormous distance through exquisite scenery. By the division of this estate England would lose one of the most delicious promenades existing in the world.

The same company that have attended Goodwood races generally proceed to Brighton, where the races take place a week later. Brighton is London transplanted to the seashore. The race-course, which is formed on the Downs and near the sea, has really a character of grandeur, which

especially arises from the association of facts. A species of harmony, noticed by English poets, exists between those two works of nature—the horse and the sea. Has not Byron, who loved them both, compared the foam of the waves to a horse's mane? Towards the end of the summer, the Great St. Leger attracts a vast number of betting-men, farmers, and spectators to Doncaster. People flock in from all parts of Yorkshire, and the railway bears thither crowds from London. It is the carnival of the North of England, which takes a pride in disputing the palm of the turf with the South. The name of this festival is not derived, as might be supposed, from a saint. St. Leger was a sporting man and a wit, many of whose sayings have been preserved. One day, when he appeared in a court of justice, he hastened to utter with a bold air the ordinary formula, "I swear."—"You are very quick in taking the oath," the justice remarked.—"I should think so," the other answered, "for I am the son of a judge." I should never end were I to mention all the other more or less important meetings which begin with the spring and are continued far into autumn.

Should not our attention now be directed to the hero of these festivals, the horse? For more than one aspect, the English horse, especially the race-horse, is a creation of human industry. It will, therefore, be curious to study the manner in which the breed is formed, the care paid to the

young animal, and the mode in which it is reare
For this purpose we must proceed to Newmark
where we shall meet two characteristic figures
the turf, the trainer and the jockey.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEWMARKET — HORSE BREEDING — THE RACE COURSE — THE DEVIL'S DYKE—LORD STAMFORD'S STABLE—MR. DAWSON—THOROUGH-BRED HORSES—FLYING CHILDERS—A TRAINING ESTABLISHMENT—THE TWO THOUSAND—JOCKEYS—THEIR SOCIAL CONDITION—CELEBRATED JOCKEYS—TEMPTATIONS.

I DO not know a duller town in England than Newmarket. Imagine a long, dreary street, to which are accidentally attached a few narrow winding lanes, which lose themselves in the fields. One side of the High Street, that to the north, is in Suffolk, while the south side is in Cambridgeshire. In traversing the town I was, however, surprised at not seeing any of those idle, ragged boys who sadden the traveller in places that possess no trade or commerce. The reason for this fact was explained to me: here the children at the age of eight or ten enter the stables, where they find work. Newmarket is a town of horses. There is only one historic souvenir in the High Street, and that is the brick mansion Charles II. built, and where he resided during the racing season. There is only one modern edifice, the house in which the members of the Jockey Club

meet. Having been introduced here, at eleven in the evening, into a long, comfortable room, lighted with gas, I noticed several notabilities of the turf; the picture of a celebrated horse, whose name I have forgotten; and a library, consisting of two very voluminous works, the "Racing Calendar," and the general stud-book. Newmarket lives on its races, and the various trades connected with them. The only persons you see there are grooms, jockeys, trainers, and sporting men. The horse-training establishments are more numerous and flourishing here than in any other part of England. Some noblemen also keep up large stables, which are real palaces. The consumption of grain per week at Newmarket, not for the support of men, but for that of horses, is formidable. The reputation and prosperity of the town, however, in this respect, are derived from a fortuitous circumstance. Spanish stallions were on board the Spanish Armada, and when the ships were wrecked, these horses got ashore by swimming, and landed on the coast of Galway. Some of them were, it is said, taken to Newmarket, where, being crossed with English horses, they became the founders of a new breed, and the origin of a very extensive trade. Great Britain at the present day supplies the whole of Europe with race-horses and jockeys. We need not feel surprised, then, that horse-training should be a source of considerable profit to Newmarket, as a great number of these animals, the handsomest

and best trained to be found in the world, is daily exported at fabulous prices. Nature also concurred with chance to give this place a special character. A training-ground extends for more than a mile and a half, with a gentle, turfy ascent, which is admirably suited, so connoisseurs say, to keep horses in wind.

Two motives led me to Newmarket on October 1, 1861. In the first place, I wished to see the races, which take place six or seven times a year, and which resemble no others in England; next, I proposed to visit those establishments, unique in Europe, where the natural qualities of the English race-horse are developed. I was accompanied by Mr. Henry Feist, editor of the "Sporting Life," who was kind enough to serve as my guide and initiate me into the mysteries of the turf. Newmarket races take place near the town, upon a heath which extends for a length of four miles, and at first only looks like a sea of verdure. They are distinguished from all other races by the fact that neither pleasure nor sights must be sought there: it is a matter of business, no more and no less. We find here no grand stand covered with heads, no tents, or sheds, or open-air theatres, or gypsies, or acrobats. The members of the Jockey Club, to whom the course belongs, would not allow them, for the noise of a fair or a festival would distract attention from the object of the meeting, which is very serious; horses are tried

and bets made. It may almost be said that there is no crowd, for most part of the spectators are driving or riding, and are lost on the immensity of the green plain. The only meeting-place is the betting ring, which is covered with asphalt and defended by wooden palings. The entrance-fee is ten shillings, and betting men stand there with a racing card, pencil, and pocketbook in their hand. In this species of open-air exchange the furious agitation offers a contrast with the peaceful character of the rest of the scene. Round the betting ring is a close, thick line of open carriages, whose occupants take an interest in the hot transactions of the coming race. In one of the vehicles I noticed a female of masculine proportions, with short cut hair, and wearing a round hat. This Amazon is well-known at Newmarket, where she never misses a meeting, and bets on the horses with the boldness of a consummate turfman. Three small houses stand on the flat heath, which is only bordered on the horizon by a belt of trees, and resembles the battlefield of Waterloo. One of these houses is the telegraph office, which transmits to London the results of the racing hour by hour; the second is the weighing-house for the jockeys; the third, quite at the end of the plain, is the saddling-house.

I left my companion, the editor of the "Sporting Life," in his office—a shepherd's cabin, which he has had transported to the end of the plain—and

proceeded to the judge's box, in front of which was the winning-post. The races are distinguished by a certain character of simplicity. The police are represented by the clerk of the course—a stout, good-looking man, with a ruddy face, dressed in a red coat, and mounted on a powerful horse. He was assisted by the course-clearers, who carry whips, the crack of which serves to remove persons in the way without ceremony. Round the course I saw gentlemen, all on horseback, and a great number of jockeys, mounted on small ponies. Newmarket races have also this peculiarity, that the course is altered several times a day, and the judge's box, instead of being stationary, as it is elsewhere, is moveable, and taken about according to the scene of action. Under these conditions, everything goes on with the coldness of a scientific experiment or a commercial operation. The vast heath was certainly studded here and there with a few handsome equipages, among which that of Lady Stamford was noticeable; but the ladies themselves had come to see and not to be seen, for the carriages were closed. I took advantage of the interval between two races to visit the Devil's Dyke. This is an excavation, extending nearly in a straight line for several miles, which at some parts is more than one hundred feet in width, and whose banks are supported by earthworks resembling railway-cuttings. This dyke borders the race-course, though the plain or heath begins again

on the other side of it. It might be called a canal, in which grass has taken the place of water, and bends and ripples beneath the breeze. The Devil's Dyke has greatly perplexed antiquaries. Some assert that it is a work of the Romans; others date it back to the Britons, before the age of Cæsar; while others again attribute it to Uffa, the first king of the East Anglians. All leads, at any rate, to the belief that it was dug to mark the limits of a military province. The obscurity that envelopes this monument of human industry and perseverance indubitably originated its name, for our ancestors were fond of ascribing to the Fiend works whose origin they could not penetrate.

On the morrow I devoted my time to visiting the stables that constitute the glory and wealth of Newmarket. The town had just experienced a sad loss. A few months previously the Duke of Bedford had died who, to use the language of the English, was a thorough-bred sportsman, and maintained at Newmarket one of the most splendid stables in the world. His son, the lovers of racing say with a sigh, does not at all inherit his father's liking for the turf; consequently, the rich collection of rare animals, stallions, blood-mares, colts, and horses in training—formed with so much care during the moiety of a man's life—had just been dispersed under the auctioneer's hammer. The sale produced 7736*l.*, and yet connoisseurs declare that this sum does not represent one-third of the late Duke's

outlay. Thank goodness, Newmarket retains another patron: I allude to Lord Stamford, who remains staunch as an anchor to the turf, and thus protects the old metropolis of horses. It is, so to speak, his kingdom. Very recently it had been Lady Stamford's birthday: joyous peals of bells incessantly proclaimed the happy anniversary, and an army of jockeys sat down to a splendid dinner annually given them by their liberal master. The stables enjoy a European reputation. It is difficult to gain access to them; but as Lord Stamford himself had been kind enough to announce my visit to his trainer, Mr. Joseph Dawson, I entered without any obstacle the sanctuary of sport. The trainer of an English nobleman is himself a gentleman of importance, who keeps many servants, a pretty house, a drawing-room furnished with the most sumptuous elegance, and his handsomely-dressed wife does the honours gracefully. I was first taken into a yard enclosed by brick buildings with two wings which are connected with a central edifice surmounted by a belfry. In the centre of the yard an enormous Newfoundland dog was enthroned in a magnificent kennel. All along the buildings were doors opening to let the horses pass in and out. Each of them has its sleeping apartment. It is a very clean, well-lighted stall, with walls carefully whitewashed and covered with iron plates, a manger shining like marble, and a bed

of fresh straw, removed every morning, for here wet litter is unknown. Each of these horses has its groom or lad to perform its toilet and supply its every want. This toilet is extremely complicated: it requires a complete stock of sponges, combs, brushes, towels and other articles, which reminded me of a fashionable lady's dressing-room. The horses are also dressed in cloth garments which many a poor man in London would be glad to have. The grooms, who are nearly all of the same age (twelve or thirteen), and have a family likeness, sleep in the stables on beds which are raised during the day and then assume the shape of a chest of drawers. I visited in succession twenty-seven horses, without counting those in the paddocks or belonging to the stud, which amount to seventy in number. Well! each of these is relatively a fortune. They all bear well-known or famous names, they have figured with honour in contests of the turf, and their genealogy is without a spot. Nearly all of them have Arab blood in their veins. Some were born in the establishment, others in Yorkshire, the great breeding county, or various parts of Great Britain—but they are all trained solely for racing. I stopped before a mare that is known by the name of Little Lady, and is a favourite of the Countess of Stamford. The latter lady takes pleasure in giving her with her own hand apples, oranges, cakes, and other dainties. What most struck my attention was the affection

this mare entertained for a cat, which she amused herself with caressing, and gently laying on its back with her mouth. Such attachments are not rare in English stables; I may mention, for instance, Chillaby, a very ferocious race-horse, whom only one groom dared approach, but who felt a tender affection for a lamb: he would spend hours in removing the flies that annoyed his friend. The heads of the stable are very careful not to thwart his inclinations. Thorough-bred horses, they say, resemble pretty women—they have their fancies, their caprices, which must be respected; that keeps them in good humour, makes them fond of their stall, and renders them more docile in the long hours of solitude and indolence they spend away from the turf. Lord Stamford's stables ought especially to be visited at night, by the light of the gas playing on the slight and yet powerful forms of these race-horses; it looks like a palace of the Arabian Nights.

There are several establishments of the same nature, though less sumptuous, at Newmarket; but, before dwelling on the character of the stables, will it not be as well to form a clear idea of what the English call a thorough-bred or race-horse? For this purpose, I will have recourse to the information I obtained from a member of the Jockey Club who has spent his life in studying the question of the turf for his own amusement. The breeding of the English horse has been a

slow, methodical, and successive work: it began with the ancient Britons, and from age to age has reflected the manners of society as it became developed; I will only dwell, however, on the race-horse. The latter appears late in history: there were races in England before there were race-horses. At the outset all horses were admitted that displayed strength and speed, and but slight attention was paid to their pedigree. It was not till after the Restoration that we see a class of horses entirely devoted to the turf. Charles II., following the example of James I., Henry VIII., and several other kings, his predecessors, turned his attention to the improvement of horses. He even sent one of the officers of his household to purchase mares well known by the name of royal mares, from which nearly all the modern race-horses are descended. Cromwell himself had left the remains of a celebrated stud: his famous White Jack figures with honour in the annals of the turf; and when the Royalists pounced on the property of the Protector, they found a valuable mare hidden in the vaults of a church, which from this circumstance received the name of the Coffin mare. We must, however, come down to the beginning of the last century to find the real ancestors of the modern thorough-breds. One of the oldest is the Darley Arabian; so called because it belonged to Mr. Darley, and had been bred near Aleppo in the desert of Palmyra. This horse had

illustrious descendants; among them being Flying Childers, whose history resembles a legend, such heroic exploits on the turf being attributed to it. More than twenty years had elapsed since Mr. Darley proved the value of Arab blood, when Lord Godolphin obtained by chance a horse of singular shape, to which the name of the Godolphin Arabian has been given. Turf authorities are still doubtful as to whether this horse was an Arab or a Barb. In any case, the career of this horse had been romantic, and can only be compared to that of Cosmopolite, a horse of Baron de Nevières, which gained the great prize at the last Newmarket races, and has drawn a cart in France, where it was purchased. Presented to Lord Godolphin, the Barb spent a considerable time in the stud stables, ere his merits were recognised. Like the Darley Arabian, he became the sire of a dynasty of memorable race-horses and died in 1753, at the age of nine-and-twenty.

It will now be easy to answer the question, What is meant by thorough-bred? He is a horse whose genealogy can be followed through several generations, and whose ancestors gained their quarterings of nobility on the turf, or established their reputation in the stud as founders of a superior breed of horse. Like the English aristocracy, the race-horse is of foreign origin. He is descended from Arab, Barb, or Turkish blood: but care, education, crossing with an English or Scotch breed, and also

the climate of Great Britain have greatly augmented his original value. He has become much taller than his predecessors, longer and slimmer, but has not on that account lost any of his muscular strength. Whenever an English horse has competed with the best Arab horses, he has invariably gained the victory.

Purity of blood being the first quality of a race-horse, we can easily assume that the English have paid great attention to the selection of their stud. Most of the noble patrons of the turf breed thorough-breds on their own estates; there are, however, special breeding establishments whose owners speculate in crossing the best breeds of race-horses. One that I visited is at Middle Park, Eltham. Meadows, overshadowed here and there by large trees, cover a surface of about 500 acres. There are four stallions to fifty mares. The stallions are each kept in a separate stall, while the brood-mares roam about at liberty in the paddocks—grass-enclosures surrounded by hedges and palings, in which is a shed for the night. These mares at times challenge each other, and perform voluntary races which recal the glorious days of their emulation on the turf. It is to the interest of Mr. Blenkiron, the proprietor of this establishment, to procure the most fashionable blood, no matter at what cost. During the last century, only the nobility had horses for racing; and the honour of producing a favourite was at that time

more regarded than making a profit. At the present day it is no longer so; with but few exceptions, race-horses are bred for speculation. The result is that their numbers have greatly increased; it is calculated that the number of these noble animals produced now is five times greater than it was in 1762. The art of crossing has also progressed; it is at the present time both a science and a trade, often indeed an occult science, for which the breeders would greatly like to discover the philosopher's stone. In spite of considerable obscurity and uncertainty,—for more than one mystery still remains to be penetrated in the great work of nature,—this science is at any rate based on a solid principle, the transmission of peculiar qualities by inheritance. It is hardly possible to believe, say the breeders, what runs in the blood, especially in that of thorough-breds. Not alone the external characteristics, such as colour, form of limbs and feet, but also the tastes, vices, and certain eccentricities are found to be handed down from generation to generation. Practical breeders are so thoroughly acquainted with these facts, that they reject with unwavering resolution any blood that may produce hereditary infirmities, and correct by useful crossing any minor defects or less obstinate temper. The first care at an establishment like that of Middle Park is, therefore, the selection of animals which have acquired real titles to distinction. A horse that has won a great

number of races and has figured honourably at Epsom, is considered the most worthy to reproduce the race. There are, however, exceptions, and some racers celebrated on the turf have obtained no success in the stud. In some cases the causes of these blighted hopes may be discovered; the most renowned horses often reach the paddocks exhausted by their exploits, and require several years' rest in order to recover their entire vigour. It is thus that, according to the annals of the British stud, a considerable number of celebrated stallions and mares have only produced their best colts when they were at a relatively advanced age.

At Middle Park the brood-mares are generally covered in January, and pass the eleven months before giving birth in the paddocks. It is a pretty sight to see the dam with her foal; I took pleasure in watching them as they lay side by side at the foot of a large tree that cast a shadow over the fine and velvety grass. The dam fanning her little one with her silky tail, with ears erect and eyes restless even in repose, seemed ready to leap like a deer at the slightest sound that might menace the innocent creature. Some of the foals were still sucking, while others had left their dams. Like children in the school-playground, the foals were sporting together, and trying their racing strength at an early age, by pursuing each other. Their pretty, intelligent heads, the grace of their outline, the elegance of their movements, the

symmetry of their fine forms, and their aristocratic demeanor, all already revealed in them a noble origin, and in some instances a decided vocation for the turf. If I am not greatly mistaken, these hereditary features of the thorough-breds have greatly assisted in fortifying the ideas of the English as to the hierarchy of birth. Between thorough-breds and half-breds there is, they say, themselves, the same difference as between a man and a gentleman. The establishment at Middle Park is composed of one hundred horses. In June of each year there is a public sale of yearlings, which fetch a considerable price. In 1860, Colonel Townley gave 1500*l.* for one of them.

Up to this point the foal is a rough diamond, and now has to be polished. When a young thorough-bred has been recognised as fit for the turf, he is sent to the training establishment. It is no easy matter to determine, from the appearance of a foal, the racing qualities he may possess. The most skilful men are sometimes deceived, and such errors become in certain cases the source of the most cruel miscalculations. This winner of a future Derby is sometimes the last hope of a noble house, the winged dragon on whose back a ruined gentleman hopes to leap the abyss which turf losses have dug in his fortunes. The young pupil is most generally sent to Newmarket where a perfectly new career opens before him. The free and happy hours of the paddock are succeeded

suddenly by the strict discipline of the stable, the minute attentions of the toilette, and soon after by the hard fag of the practising ground. Most of the training establishments are real manufactories: horses are taken in to board there for a fixed sum, and they are trained for racing purposes. Some amateurs who keep up similar establishments have not profit so much as honour in view—or, as they say, the blue ribbon of the turf. Baron Rothschild, for instance, would willingly give the value of three Derbies to win one. Well! the celebrated financier, in spite of great pecuniary sacrifices, has not been hitherto successful with his horses; while an English gentleman, Colonel Townley, who has but recently figured in the racing world, and keeps up a relatively small stud, has won an important stake at Epsom for two years in succession. Hence something else beside money is needed in the turf-question; as sporting men say, it is tact. Most of the good trainers, whether in business for themselves or managing the racing stables of noblemen, are real *artistes* in horses; they deal in practical science, natural history in action. Speculation does not exclude enthusiasm with them. On this head an anecdote is told about a trainer who was ordered to get a mare called Eleanor ready for the Derby. The nearer the greater day arrived, the more anxious and haggard the man became. He could not eat, he could not sleep, and at length became seriously ill. As

he kept his bed for the first time in his life, the trainer's relations fancied that he must be at death's door, and called in the clergyman of the parish to console him. The dying man only listened absently to the worthy pastor's discourse; he tossed on his bed, and groaned like a man whose conscience is ill at rest. At length the rector said to him, "My friend, have you not something on your conscience that troubles you? If it be so, I implore you to confide it to me."—"Yes," the other replied, "I have something on my heart which I will tell you,—but you alone." The clergyman bent down to the dying man's lips, and the latter whispered in his ear, "Eleanor is a doubtful horse!" This doubtful horse, however, won two great stakes, the Derby and Oaks. On hearing this, the trainer got up again, quite well. I will not assert that all trainers carry their point of honour so far; but it is certain they feel as much self-pride as interest in the success of their pupils.

There are different methods: some trainers pet the horses they are breaking in; others, on the contrary, beat them with great severity; while others, again, whom I consider the most sensible, have no fixed rule or plan. They study the character of each horse, and adopt the system that appears to them best suited for the nature of the subject. It may be laid down, however, as a general rule, that the life of a young race-horse is not rosy-coloured. On the nervous and irritable

back, which has hitherto only borne a piece of wood, called the "dumb jockey," there leaps for the first time a jockey of flesh and bone, whose weight is small, but whose firm hand and knees of steel at once teach the haughty animal that it has found a master. At the beginning slow work is employed, and after that comes strong work. After scouring the plain at a gentle gallop, the young horse goes out to take its first sweat, on a fine morning when the lark is shaking from its wings the fresh morning dew. The length of these sweats, or forced races, is increased as the faculties of the animal become developed. In most of these exercises the colt has another horse as monitor, for horse-training is founded to a certain extent on the system of mutual instruction. During this time, the quality and quantity of food, like that of water, are strictly measured according to the nature of the work. If the neck or shoulders of the horse are too well covered with flesh, these parts are clothed with warm blankets to reduce them by transpiration. Owing to the exercise and this assiduous care the animal gradually acquires muscles firm as steel, and a shining skin, gentle to the touch as a woman's hand. The trainer's education has sometimes metamorphosed some horses to such an extent that the owner himself was unable to recognise them. It is not alone the external form which is cultivated, but also the moral energy. The class of thorough-

breds, a trainer told me, is especially distinguished from other horses by emulation, and a species of chivalrous feeling; its principal strength is in its head. When the pupil is sufficiently advanced, he receives, so to speak, the artist's final touch, and then comes the first trial, which takes place before a small number of knowing men. Hitherto his education has been given him in secrecy, for the greatest mystery prevails in the trainer's stables, and spreads over all the exercise. The moment has now arrived to launch him in the world.

Most of the young horses intended for the Derby figure first at Newmarket, in a race known as the "Two Thousand Guineas," which is, as it were, a preface to Epsom. Some sporting men, however, are accustomed not to "blow" their horses, and keep back, under the greatest secrecy, a formidable candidate for the greater event, who in such a case is called "a dark horse." One of the most prodigious flyers England ever possessed was Eclipse, so called because he first saw light in the great eclipse of 1764. He was five years old when entered in a race for the first time. This latter circumstance excited suspicion and curiosity. When he appeared at Epsom on May 3, 1769, he swept everything before him. He had been bred by the Duke of Cumberland, and, on the death of the Duke, was sold for seventy-five guineas at the stud. Before the horse had yet run, Colonel O'Kelly

purchased one half of the future wonder for six hundred and fifty guineas, and at a later date became sole owner of the animal by paying an additional sum of eleven hundred guineas. When somebody wished to buy the horse back, O'Kelly asked £25,000 in cash, and an annuity of £500 a-year. At the present day there is no horse in England worth such fabulous sums: but some represent a considerable amount. In 1861, a racehorse named Klarikoff was accidentally burned in a railway carriage. Some days before the Derby Lord St. Vincent had given the large sum of five hundred guineas for half the horse and his engagements; and yet Klarikoff was not a first-rate horse.

Among the horses that compete for the Derby, some bury themselves alive in their victory. They have been trained to win: they have won: and their part is played out! Others, on the other hand, emerge from this new trial hardened, and as it were tempered, by success. In the first place they alone put in an appearance at Goodwood, and in the St. Leger, where they do not always respond to the eager hopes they have produced. If anything resembles the uncertainty and deception of human life, it is certainly the turf: the victor of to-day frequently becomes the vanquished of to-morrow. A multitude of very trivial causes contributes to these accidents, which produce enormous losses in the betting ring. I will not speak here of the frauds or criminal practices

which may alter the chances of the turf; but a stone, or the slightest accident, is often sufficient to arrest the impetuous flight of the favourite. I admire the remark of an English nobleman, who exclaimed, when he saw the horses he backed start, "There are my guineas taking the bit in their teeth, I only hope they will not bolt." Success also depends to a great extent on the character of the race-horses, for, like all thorough-breds, they are capricious, and have their days for running. The turf men quote, for instance, a horse of the name of Independence, who was more than once the despair of the betting ring. When he was in a good temper all went well, and he cleared the ground with the velocity of a cannon-ball; but, on the other hand, when he did not feel in the vein, he reared, and refused to run, in spite of all the efforts of his jockey: in the language of the turf, he found it advisable to shut up. Another celebrated race-horse, Euphrates, had also curious eccentricities, which caused sporting-men considerable anxiety. As he had been in training from an early age, experience had taught him that on the eve of a race, horses were subjected in the stall to a peculiar regimen and treatment. This sagacity, joined to a very nervous temperament, rendered him at such times restless—no more and no less than the general of an army on the night before a great battle—and this caused him to lose a portion of his strength. The trainer, having noticed this, determined hence-

forth carefully to avoid anything that might cause umbrage to the suspicious animal, or give him a hint of coming events. Euphrates had another singular habit of putting out his tongue when he was in a good humour, and inclined to go. This was a sign skilful bettors took advantage of: the animal thus warned them that they might back it safely.

On the other hand, there is a notable difference in the way in which race-horses gain their renown: some appear on the turf with *éclat*, and at once eclipse all around them: others only rise gradually, and, as the turf poets say, tear their laurels from the hand of Time. Two or three years ago an aged horse, of the name of Fisherman, won at Ascot, who has since become an "institution" in the racing world. The opening career of this celebrated horse had been most unfortunate: and it was not till after several defeats that he broke the ice at Nottingham, where he gained the Trial Stakes. Since then he has run in one hundred and fourteen races, and won seventy-one times. A jockey had taken care of him when he was in the stables of his old trainer, and whenever the horse met him on the turf, he saluted his old friend with a joyous neigh. We might, perhaps, imagine that race-horses, when their education is ended, have nothing more to do between the race-meetings; but that is a mistake; drilling is for them, as for soldiers, a life-long occupation.

A good race-horse generally remains with honour on the turf till the sixth or seventh year. After disputing the prize in the brilliant tourneys where he enjoyed all the independence of his valour, he is generally entered for handicaps. This is a word which needs explanation. The name is given to races in which it is sought to equalise the chances of victory between the competitors. A horse in all the flower of his reputation is not put to such trials, for he would have to bear too heavy a weight—the weight of glory, which in this case is expressed by a weight of lead. This handicapping each horse according to age, merit, and victories achieved, is a delicate duty, requiring knowledge and special talent on the part of the handicapper. The most celebrated man for such matters in England is Admiral Rous. With this the period of decay commences for the race-horse, especially when he has been a victim of those accidents which are too frequent on the turf. He descends then to country races, in which the stakes are a trifle. Look at this haughty race-horse, formerly greeted with such homage, perspiring and galloping in a vulgar arena to gain the honour of being flogged with a silver mounted whip. Oh, gloomy mirror of glory! It would not be so bad if the humiliation stopped here: but on this rapid and slippery incline the hero of a hundred celebrated days falls at times even lower still. I was looking one day in the streets

of London at a cab-horse, which affected the airs of a ruined gentleman. The driver, on opening the door, said to me, "You are going to have the honour of being drawn by one of the old favourites for the Derby;" and he uttered emphatically the name of a horse which I had really seen in the annals of the turf. I at first believed that this was a jest, and it is very possible that the cabman had deceived me: but I have since assured myself that a very large number of the horses that drag hired carriages over the London pavement are old turf celebrities.

It was not the same at the outset, when the class of thorough-breds was not so numerous; but now that the resources are so extensive, nothing would be gained by keeping all race-horses for breeding purposes. "And besides," a jockey said to me, "horses are like men: some are born under a lucky and others under an unlucky star." Those that are born under a lucky star, end their days, on the contrary, in a stud, where they become the sultans of a brilliant seraglio. There, their new services are registered and esteemed equally with their old. When they die—for fate does not spare any majesty on earth—a necrological notice, a sort of funeral oration, informs the world of the melancholy event. I read some time back, in a very serious paper, *Bell's Life in London*, the following lines: "We have to announce the death of a celebrity, which took place at Croft,

near Darlington, on the 20th of this month (April). She had been suffering for a long time from an abscess, which had almost reduced her to a skeleton. All the art of medicine was unable to arrest the progress of the fatal malady. Alice Hawthorn was twenty-three years of age, and her successes are historical. We will not attempt to follow her in her long and honourable career, but it will be remembered. . . ." I ransacked my memory in vain, but could not call to mind any English celebrity in literature or art of the name of Alice Hawthorn. I therefore hurried on to the end of the article, which gave me the clue to the enigma. "It will be seen from this impartial biography that the old mare, throughout her turf career, and that in the stud, has acquired an eminent position among the glories of the time." What a pity it is that horses do not know how to read!

After the trainer and the race-horse, the man who most contributes to gain those great turf victories, which agitate public opinion so greatly in England, is the jockey. At the commencement of racing this special kind of men did not exist; or, at least, was not so predominant as at present. Several gentlemen rode their own horses. Queen Anne, that cold person, galloped more than once over the Doncaster course. Another lady, the beautiful and daring Mrs. Thornton, wife of a colonel who was President of the Jockey Club, and Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, frequently

figured in the same races, with the bridle in her hand, a whip between her teeth, and dressed in a tunic of the colour of a leopard skin, short enough to display her small foot and her splendidly embroidered petticoats. In proportion, however, as a special class of thorough-breds was formed, a peculiar race of men was required to guide them on the turf. At the present day every betting-man knows that the name of the rider is of great assistance to the efforts and lucky chances of the race-horse. Hence the value of a horse rises or falls several degrees in the betting-market, according to the jockey who mounts it. Some sporting men complain bitterly that the jockey class has lately lost in quality what it has gained in numbers. Where can we find, now-a-days, they say, a Buckle, a Sam Chifney, a William Clift, a Scott, and, before all, a Jem Robinson? The latter, who was surnamed the Prince of Jockeys, was regarded a few years ago as the "surest hand" to whom the fortune of a race could be entrusted. In 1816, a clever, daring speculator, the notorious Crockford, who kept a gambling-house in London, and was then in the full tide of his prosperity, engaged the services of Jem Robinson—at the time a youth of seventeen—for the next Derby. A trainer in whose stables Jem was engaged, was sorry to see one of his best pupils thus taken from him. He avenged himself by mounting him on the great day upon a horse called Azor, who appeared

to have no chance, for he had a stable companion of the name of Student, who was first favourite. Robinson started on his insignificant steed, and the jockey, to his great surprise, soon found himself alone. He turned in his saddle, and, looking behind him, saw the other horses and jockeys following him at a respectful distance. This look, quick as lightning, had been sufficient to convince him that Azor, despised and unknown, was worth more than his reputation. He worked away with elbows and knees, whip and spur, and landed Azor a triumphant first. It was the first and last success of this horse, whose name, however, is still remembered. Must we attribute this unexpected victory to the talent of the jockey, or to the uncertainty which too frequently prevails as to the real or accidental value of horses engaged in a race? Possibly to both causes; still it is certain that a good jockey can, at a given moment, bring out of a horse all that nature has put in him, and no one else can do the same.

Most of the jockeys began by being lads in the training stables. They have slept with their horses from their tenderest years, leaped on their backs so soon as they could hold on, and galloped them across the plain for two or three hours every morning. Their apprenticeship has been rude; they have undergone the sullen, silent, stern discipline, absolute subordination, and at times the system of *espionnage*, that prevail in the racing

establishments. This does not prevent them, however, from drinking and swearing like demons. Very few of them have received a thorough education; for the stable has been their school. Some English trainers, however, exercise a species of moral surveillance over the people employed in their stables; one of them, who lives in the north of England, goes to church every Sunday morning followed by his grooms and jockeys, who march in line like a company of soldiers. When together, they speak a species of jargon, which is not wanting in energy and picturesqueness. Most of the jockeys have a peculiar physical and moral stamp, which increases with age, and comes both from nature and education. They are rarely beyond five feet two or three in height, but they have all the muscle and nerve that art can concentrate in so small a form. I say art, for these miniature Hercules owe their strength and lightness in great measure to the exercise they take, the dietary they follow, and the warm clothing by which they produce copious perspiration in order to keep down any dangerous corpulence. Some sportingmen, it is true, complain of the present system, which subjects jockeys to a certain weight in most races. This system, they say, tends to introduce on the turf a race of Lilliputians, whose entire merit consists in their lightness. Their shape is also more or less calculated to establish a species of affinity between the man and the horse. Dis-

mounted, the jockey is but half himself; he almost becomes a ridiculous being. He must be seen on horseback, and then who will not admire the grace, elegance, boldness, and flexible resistance of these little centaurs? There are different methods or styles in the way of riding races. For instance, some jockeys think that, in a race, there is never any time to lose; others, on the contrary, excellent judges of the ground and of the value of their opponents, do not hurry at the beginning: they keep back till the moment when they slip through the groups of running horses, and come in first by a terrific rush. There are some jockeys who have a knack of dividing their weight by changing their position on the saddle, and who, light though they be, find means to become several pounds lighter. Among the jockeys, some have received these gifts from nature, or a sort of infused science; others follow the traditions of their father, who was himself a jockey, or those of the great riding-schools, which are transmitted as in the schools of music and painting.

Very many jockeys are married. If I may believe what I have heard, these little horsemen only please to a certain extent: they either merely gain the somewhat disdainful sympathy and curiosity of women, who regard them as brief playthings; or in many other cases inspire powerful and romantic passions. Most of them marry the daughters of trainers. If they have a reputa-

tion, their engagement in life is announced in the sporting papers in the same way as the marriage of princes or *artistes.* There are poor jockeys and rich jockeys: the latter even possess what would be called a fortune in France. When going through Newmarket, I noticed in the High Street one of the prettiest houses in the town as regarded architecture and the good taste of the ornaments: this house had been built for a jockey. Mr. Crockford was accustomed to say that more plate could be seen on his jockeys' tables than on his own. In 1823, Robinson, who gained in that year both the Derby and St. Leger, received from a Scotch gentleman the sum of one thousand pounds as a gift. I know a jockey who belongs to a very poor family: at the age of eight his quickness was noticed by a nobleman, who sent him to school: at a later date he entered his lordship's stable, and at the present day is worth between fifteen hundred and two thousand a-year. The net revenue of the jockey does not consist merely of his yearly wages; he is paid additionally each time he rides a race, and receives thrice the amount when he wins. Some great gentlemen, in the latter case, will let him pocket the stakes, satisfying themselves with the honour.

As turf victories or defeats are left to a great extent in the hands of the jockeys, it is to the interest of the gentlemen, and even turf-men, to pay these important allies liberally. No power in

the world is more exposed to corruption, or more surrounded by temptations, than that of these horse-subduers. I will not say that their conscience is more easily seduced than that of other men, but most of the rich sportsmen find it prudent to strengthen their morals by a high salary, which places the jockeys above temptation. The good understanding between master and jockey is generally based on honourable motives; they are well paid in order to arouse their emulation: but if I may credit the secret annals of the turf, this generosity has sometimes encouraged culpable services. I will suppose a roguish turfite —and unhappily more than one has been met with in the sporting world: he openly backs in the betting-ring a horse that is to run in his name at the next meeting; but he has secret agents who bet against the same racer. If the amount against the horse far exceed that put upon it, there is an advantage in losing. He in that case says to the jockey, "You will not win this time." The jockey submits reluctantly to this desire, for his reputation is at stake; but that too frequently yields to powerful considerations of self-interest. It is even proverbial among jockeys that there is more art in losing a race cleverly with a good horse, than in winning it under the same conditions. These facts are fortunately very rare: otherwise the noble institution of the turf would soon fall into discredit.

Some of the jockeys will ride up to their fiftieth year; but most of them die or retire early. As a rule, jockeys do not live long: this comes doubtless from the desperate efforts they make on the course, the regimen they undergo, and possibly from excesses combined with certain voluntary privations. What do they do when they grow old? Some become trainers; others employ their money in farming or sporting enterprises, conducted on a small scale. As long as they are engaged in riding, the law of the turf prevents them from betting; but I should not like to assert that all submit themselves willingly to this prohibition, whose wisdom, however, it is easy to appreciate. "How is it possible not to be singed a little," one of them said to me, "when you live in the midst of a fire?" Not far from Newmarket I met another jockey, who, having grown too heavy, said good-bye to the turf, where he held a high position, and now lives in a pretty little country house, with his family. "No matter," he said: "rest is killing me, and whenever I see a race-horse, my heart leaps as if I heard again the signal, 'Go!' After all, I must put up with it. Life resembles the turf. I have left the starting-post a long way behind me. Heaven grant that I may reach the winning-post on my two legs, and without stumbling!" This last reflection was evidently inspired by the religious ideas which are found to a greater or less extent in all

classes of English society, especially at a certain age.

We now know the active population of the race-course; but a number of parasitic existences are attached to the turf. It is at London that we shall find the home of the speculations, frequently made a year beforehand, upon the events which are being prepared at Newmarket. This home is Tattersall's.

CHAPTER XIV.

TTATERSALL'S—THE SUBSCRIPTION ROOM—THE BETTING RING—BETTING MEN—THE SWELL—BOOK-MAKING—THE LEVIATHAN — BOOK-MAKERS — TIPSTERS — SPORTING PAPERS — "BELL'S LIFE"—"THE SPORTING LIFE"—TRAMPS—THE JOCKEY CLUB—RUNNING REIN—CONCLUSION.

EVERYBODY in London knows Tattersall's, and yet there is no more obscure and difficult spot for a foreigner to discover. You can pass a hundred times Hyde Park Corner, leaving behind you the equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington, enter the street in which St. George's Hospital stands, and yet not remark close to the latter building a dark dingy lane with an arcade. But our road leads down this lane, at the end of which, confined between the hospital buildings and irregular houses, is the famous establishment which princes of the blood, bishops, and the entire aristocracy of the turf, have frequently honoured with their presence. It was founded in 1795 by Richard Tattersall, chief of the dynasty of that name, who had been training-groom to the Duke of Kingston. This house has two distinct specialities : it is a market for valuable horses, and a species of

exchange where men who bet on races assemble. The market is held in a yard, the centre of which is occupied by a species of round temple, with painted wooden pillars, and a cupola surmounted by a bust of George IV. Beneath the cupola is the figure of a sitting fox, which seems to personify the genius of the place—I mean, cunning. In one corner of the yard is the desk of the auctioneer—the great Tattersall himself—who, armed with a monstrous hammer, knocks down the horses, exclaiming, "Sold!" All the rest of this wing is occupied by stables, through which the finest horses in the world pass, and by coach-houses, in which are vehicles of every description, equally for sale. Above the door I read the following inscription, which surprised me by the size of the letters: "No horse can be taken away till paid for." Opposite this yard, but on the other side of the lane, stands the subscription-room, which, through its style of building, and varnished oak door, bears a great likeness to a Dissenters' chapel. It is here that the fraternity of bettors meet on certain days and at certain hours. This room is lofty, rather spacious, and plainly decorated: on the walls are engravings of some patrons of the turf, and portraits in oil of celebrated horses. In the centre is an octagonal row of desks, at which the club-members register their bets or settle their accounts. From the interior of the subscription-room (so called because the

annual entrance is 50*l.*) you go down by some stone steps into an enclosure, which was doubtless a garden formerly. Here there is a grass-plot, surrounded by a ring of yellow sand. This grass circle is the famous betting-ring of Tattersall's; and the sand-path is a sort of trial-ground for horses on sale days.

A stranger should visit Tattersall's at a "hot time": I do not mean the heat of summer here, but the ardour of business. This establishment has in fact its thermometer and almanac, which are entirely independent of the observations made at the Astronomical Office. It is on the eve of great races, when the market is continually agitated by rumours, and also after solemn days, such as the Derby, Ascot Cup, or St. Leger, that Tattersall's offers a really extraordinary aspect. The approaches to the dingy arcade are besieged by a crowd of vehicles and carriages. In the lane leading to the subscription-room you notice faces and costumes whose prototype is seen nowhere else save at the race-course or at the horse-fair; they are taciturn men, with harsh features, dressed in grey trousers, extremely tight and sometimes buttoned over the boot, a waistcoat of the same colour, and a broad-brimmed hat, that makes them look like Quakers of the turf; they nearly all come from the country, and have an interest in the studs, stables, or training establishments. Round them throng the betting men of London, some of

whom are distinguished by a very marked turfy look, while others only betray themselves to a practised eye through slight eccentricities of dress. The latter generally wear a blue bird's-eye neckkerchief fastened with a gold pin, either representing a horse-shoe or a fox's head. They are fond of jewellery, and like to display a heavy gold watch-chain over their waistcoats, while their fingers sparkle with carbuncle rings.

All these men constitute what the English call outsiders: they are not admitted into the sacred circle, and form the "plebs" of the community. As the betting tempest increases, however, the flood of business overflows to them. They then furiously participate in the rise and fall of those imaginary funds at the bottom of which are a horse's name, and the more or less dubious chance of a victory on the turf. All along the lane you only hear such conversations as these: "Well, any news of Rataplan?" "He is drummed out of the market." "And Phœnix?" "That rare bird has lost all its feathers in the popular favour." "And black Diamond?" "Famous: he's at five to two." Let us now enter the centre of this agitation, the subscription-room, where princes of the blood royal formerly figured, and where members of the English aristocracy may still be seen. Tattersall's is a neutral ground on which very mingled social conditions meet, whose sole tie is the betting fever. Two very marked figures stand

out of the stormy mob: the elderly gentleman, in his blue coat with gilt buttons, and the swell. The latter is most usually drawn into the betting ring by vanity. He is introduced by a friend at Tattersall's, and, provided that he bears an honourable name, finds easy admission. The swell is generally looked upon kindly by the lynxes of the place, for this lion is most frequently a lamb, whom it is an easy task to fleece. His friend undertakes to make his book for him: this book of course is not meant for publication, but it will bring in more money than the works of Byron or Walter Scott. Making a book, in the language of Tattersall's, consists in betting various sums for and against certain horses, so that in any case the balance may prove favourable to the interests of the author. This book, all covered with hieroglyphic signs and characters, is then placed in the hands of the young gentleman, who, being not yet initiated to the writing of the adepts, does not exactly know what it all means. All he understands, after due explanation, is that these signs represent transactions, and that he will win three or four thousand pounds if, as there is no reason to doubt, the horse he has backed should win. The event soon comes off at Epsom or elsewhere, and most usually the obliging friend then informs the swell that, contrary to all expectation, luck has turned; it is the novice who now owes four or five hundred pounds, which he will have to pay within two days, under

penalty of losing his character and seeing his name posted in the room as that of a defaulter. Betting-men who are regarded as safe sometimes obtain a respite, or, as it is called, breathing time. Their absence, however, always gives rise to disagreeable remarks in the subscription-room. Some, in fact, take advantage of this respite to bolt and cross the Channel. I am bound to say, though, that such cases are rare: as a general rule the betting-men, though they frequently experience heavy losses, honour their engagements with truly British good grace and dignity. The same men will neglect paying their tradesmen; but it must not be forgotten that turf debts are gambling debts, debts of honour, and must rank before all others. It was thus that the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, and many other English noblemen who left enormous deficits, never failed to pay at once the bets they had lost on races.

The origin of this betting mania has strangely perplexed the historians of the turf. In the first place, it is in the English character. I one day saw two boys disputing as to the relative value of their balls. One of them, fumbling in his pockets, exclaimed, "I'll bet sixpence that mine bounds higher than yours." He stopped—for, to his great disappointment, his pocket was empty. "Well," he continued resolutely, "I'll bet my cap." People bet at an early age and upon everything in England. Is it, therefore, surprising that the turf,

which has so long attracted the attention of the English, should have given rise to gambling transactions? At the origin, challenges were made of one horse against another. Presently, the spectators took an interest in this sort of chance-work, and tried to predict the winner amid the competitors. This ardour for guessing and speculating on the success of race-horses soon spread, until the workmen in the shops, children at school, and servants in the kitchen, got accustomed to make bets on the Derby. The new theory is the science and method which have with time been introduced into this form of gambling. The turfmen naturally sought ways to reduce their chances of losing, and from this study resulted a system which is now known by the name of book-making. Another equally novel thing is the existence of a class of men entirely living by turf wagers. I rank these among the parasites, and it would be difficult to give them another name. It must not be supposed, however, that the betting-man spends his life in idleness: this man who has apparently nothing to do is extremely occupied. He is incessantly on the look-out. His symbol is the eye that figures at the head of "Bell's Life in London," with the motto *Nunquam dormio.* He is present at every race, travels from one end of England to the other, endures all temperatures, and defies the whistling north-east breeze on Newmarket Heath. Incessantly on the watch himself, he has also scouts

and correspondents whose reports he studies with the most scrupulous attention. He picks up all the turf news, consults the "Racing Calendar," and calculates all the chances. If you enter into conversation with him, he will perhaps appear to you narrow in his ideas, and very ignorant in matters that interest men of the world; but place him on his own ground, and you will soon perceive that this man has very certain knowledge on many points that escape you. He has especially sounded one entire phase of human nature. I do not assert that it is the most brilliant and honourable phase; but at any rate he has reached the gloomy depths of our littlenesses and deficiencies. His experience is unbounded, and, though it may merely embrace his own speciality, he possesses it entirely. He knows by heart the names of the horses that have run for half a century, their relative value for various distances, from half a mile up to three or four miles, and the manner in which the different weights imposed on them affect the speed of each. Now follow him to the betting-market: this man is always master of himself amid all the buffetings of Fortune. His forehead, marked with mathematical wrinkles, if I may be allowed the expression, has the impassiveness of the Sphynx. With all these practical qualities and knowledge, does he win more frequently than another man? We may be permitted to doubt it. "Formerly," one of them said to me, "I betted without knowledge and

won: now I bet scientifically and lose: but I have at least the consolation of being beaten according to all the rules of the art." The truth is, there are on the turf, as in all games of chance, accidents which defy all the combinations of the human mind. Betting men who know nothing of sport, who care nothing for horses—those futile creatures by which, however, they expect to win—but who concentrate all their attention on their book, are frequently no more successful than the philosophers of the profession.

There are betting men in all classes of English society. Peers of the realm, members of Parliament, even ladies, yield to the attraction offered them by this exciting life of risks and fallacious hopes. Hence it is rather difficult to establish a type, but I will fix on the book-maker. There is a distinction between the latter and the betting-man properly so called, which, however, is daily growing effaced. The bettor backs a horse, while the book-maker lays the odds against all the horses that are entered for a race: now, as among these there is naturally only one that can win, we can easily understand that the book-makers possess a great advantage. The most celebrated of them was, a few years back, a man of the name of Davis. He was a carpenter, and as such was in the employment of the present Lord Mayor, Mr. Cubitt. When he resolved to leave his trade, he went to ask his master for his tools. The latter

appealed to the rules of his establishment, which specified that any person who wished to leave the works must give notice some time beforehand, or else leave his tools. "Well, keep them!" Davis exclaimed. "You will want them sooner than I shall." He kept his word, and some time after, this same Davis—who was surnamed the Leviathan Book-maker—paid an English nobleman the enormous sum of 40,000*l.* for a single bet. The book-makers are, to some extent, the cashiers of the turf; they pay persons who win with the money of those who lose. The extent of their resources and transactions may, therefore, be estimated by the accounts they settle. An eye-witness told me that he had seen Davis, on the Tuesday after a great race, go into the settling-room with his coat pockets literally crammed with bank notes, which he distributed around him like handbills. He made a considerable fortune, and bought an estate for his father and mother. He is now living retired at Brighton. No one could at the present day be compared with him among the London book-makers. Some of them, however, resemble him in two respects: they come from a very low origin, and have reached a very high stage on the road to riches. Some of them used to drag a truck through the streets of the City. These mushroom fortunes which have sprung up in a single night—Heaven knows in what cellar and on what dung-heap—exercise a species of irresistible

attraction over some adventurous natures. A workman ground colours at a shop in the vicinity of London, when one fine morning he disappeared and did not return till late at night: it was the Derby day. His master reproached him, and said that he could not keep so irregular a workman in his service. "I don't care a button for that," the other answered. "I have earned more to-day in a few hours than I do with you for a whole year." This statement excited the curiosity of the master, who, after hearing his story, no longer blamed his workman, but, on the contrary, had the idea of entering into partnership with him, in order to find the road to this California, which could so easily be reached. Both became book-makers.

Not satisfied with gambling gains—which may be considered legitimate in the sense that they are tolerated by the law—some book-makers are said to have made a fortune by the most reprehensible practices. I will only describe one of these. They are accused of having in some cases bought a favourite horse, or induced the owner to scratch it just before a race. This illicit practice, which is called "milking," left in the hands of the book-makers all the sums laid on the favourite. Men who engage in such dark transactions are branded with the name of blacklegs: but many of them care little about the colour of their legs so long as they can carry them to fortune. The book-makers form among themselves a species of freemasonry,

whose members recognise each other by certain signs, by a peculiar language, and sometimes by a special dress. There are also innumerable shades and degrees in the hierarchy of these brethren. Some hold their court at Tattersall's or other fashionable meeting-places, while the plebeians of the profession often operate in the open air. The law prohibits betting in taverns and public establishments. If betting-offices exist at all in London, they must be of a thoroughly clandestine nature. The low class book-makers are, therefore, obliged to establish their quarters in certain streets, where small betting-men are always sure to find them. Not long ago, the street itself was prohibited to them. Certain book-makers were taken up who held their daily meetings in Bride Lane, a London lane long celebrated for open-air betting, and where the crowd of betting-men was such that children could not even find their way to school. The trial was remarkable for certain traits of manners. All the fraternity—or, to speak more correctly, all the Bohemians of the turf, were present, and impatiently awaited the magistrate's decision. He openly expressed his opinion that, in free England, everybody had the right to lose his money, if he thought proper, by betting on horses. He merely denied the right of intercepting the public traffic. This prohibition was not addressed to the book-makers more particularly than to open-air preachers, public runners, and

mountebanks. The betting-men went away, sorry at having lost their cause, but proud of having saved the principle. Since then they have collected at various places, and their head quarters are now in Hyde Park.

These men, whose probity is in some respects contestable, have, however, a special point of honour. I have often felt surprised at the facility with which the bettors intrusted their sovereigns and even bank notes to perfectly strange hands, to men whose abode is often unknown, whose character is not high, and who might so easily disappear. Well! it is very rare for these men to fail in meeting their engagements: roguery, properly so-called, forms as marked an exception among the lowest book-makers as among gentlemen. It will be objected that this relative honesty is frequently but a necessity. These book-makers would lose all their customers, and be unable to continue their trade, if they did not prove themselves irreproachable in the wide range of transactions authorised by turf law. By the side of the book-maker, whose vulgar habits are self-evident, I must place a person in the same trade, but very different in his manner. The latter deserves, up to a certain point, the epithet of respectable—which has such a deep meaning in the mouth of an Englishman. I lived at London in a house, one of the floors of which was occupied by a gentleman of about 50 years of age, the father of a

large family. This man was mysterious, steady and methodical. He often went away for some days, and his wife and children used then to say he was travelling. The latter remark led to the belief that he was a commercial traveller—a very common profession in England. His tradesmen's bills were always paid with the strictest regularity —a circumstance which in the ideas of the English adds greatly to the character of respectability. I learned afterwards that this model lodger, who had but few visitors and made no noise, had no other income or profession than betting on races, in which he took a great interest. To whatever rank they may belong, book-makers are distinguished by one general quality: they are what the English call "sharp" calculators. Their favourite maxim is that a man becomes a merchant, but is born a betting man.

As all the science of betting is based on the art of foreseeing, the races have given rise to another race of men who are called "Tipsters." Making a tip, is telling beforehand the horse that will win a race. The trade of these turf prophets, therefore, consists in directing the speculations of betting men by more or less secret information as to the relative value of the horses entered for a race. Some offer their services through the papers, by means of an advertisement thus drawn up: "Calchas, yielding to the wishes of several members of the Jockey Club, and a great number of cele-

brated turfmen, has the honor to inform the public that he is enabled to predict to a dead certainty the winners of ten races out of twelve. Think of that, and do not miss the opportunity of making a fortune. His invaluable tips for the Derby, Ascot Cup and St. Leger are now ready and defy any uncertainty. Price, two guineas a year: for each event one shilling, which may be sent in postage stamps to his address, &c., &c." Others, who have established their business, have no need to have recourse to the doubtful measure of publicity. They have their patrons in the aristocratic or the middle classes, whom they visit regularly and to whom they impart for a settled price the advantage of their experience. Unfortunately the the gift of second sight is as rare on the turf as in the magnetic *séances*, and in spite of all the hands that promise to raise the veil of the future, the most profound obscurity reigns up to the last moment over the result of a horse race. After the fashion of the ancient sibyls, some of these tipsters draw up their oracles in verse, no doubt in order to heighten the ambiguous meaning of their cabalistic language. When we regard the general range of their prognostics, we feel surprised that the augurs can meet on the turf without laughing: but man does not laugh at what he lives by, and many persons in England possess no other means of existence. After the event, every tipster wishes to have predicted correctly, and the

soothsayers then publish in the sporting papers a portion of their tip, and as they have recommended a good many horses, they naturally quote the lines in which they recognised beforehand the rare qualities of the winner. This advertisement terminates with the invariable conclusion: "Sportsmen, prove your generosity." The tipsters, in fact, expect in addition to their pay, a reward from the betting men whom they are supposed to have placed on the track of the winner. After all though, what is a present of two or three sovereigns to a man who has won heavy bets? Only one thing perplexes me—if these sorcerers of the turf are so certain of success, I ask myself why they impart their knowledge to others, instead of keeping it for themselves? With this obscure crowd of touters who make a trade of predicting the future, we must not confound the writers who venture the same sort of conjectures in the papers. The latter are guided in their previsions by more or less learned data; and yet how many times are they deceived! In 1861 the turf was especially fertile in surprises. Most of the great stakes were won by what sporting men call outsiders, horses in which no confidence was placed. I was assured that the owner of one of these winners lost 500*l.*: he placed so little confidence in his own horse that he backed the others in the race for various sums.

No fact, in my belief, so thoroughly proves the height to which the popular institution of racing

has risen in England, as the great number of newspapers connected with the turf. In the first place, all the political journals have one or more columns reserved almost daily for sporting intelligence. In addition, there are in London and the provinces many special journals which give an account of all that is going on in the racing stables, the betting market, and the Jockey Club. Some of these papers pay their exclusive attention to the sporting world; others, like "Bell's Life," give at the same time a summary glance at the political affairs of the moment. "Bell's Life" is, in its branch, as great an authority as the "Times." It is curious to see the sort of interest it takes in the great events that agitate England and Europe. The smallest race meeting occupies in its columns more space than the debates of the Houses of Parliament. After all, these papers exactly represent the ideas of certain sporting men as to the relative importance of turf events, and those of contemporary history. What do they care for Garibaldi's entrance into Naples? Kettledrum has won the Derby, that is their great victory. Lord Palmerston or the Earl of Derby has resigned; what is that? but "Mr. Ten Broek is retiring from the turf in consequence of heavy losses,"* that is news if you like! Some of these veterans of the old school would sooner see the prosperity of the

* Readers will kindly understand that this is only a supposititious case.

English manufactures and colonies decay, than the crown of the English turf fall into other hands. In order to avoid this calamity they are ready to make any sacrifices. Of course, I am not referring here to certain Lords who are equally distinguished in the House and in the betting ring. I have only in view an exceptional class, who are, however, extremely tenacious in their tastes. Another equally remarkable fact is the enormous circulation which some papers entirely devoted to the specialty we are discussing enjoy. I know not whether there is any racing paper in France, but, in any case, I would wager that it had but few subscribers. Well! in England, the "Sporting Life," which is managed with considerable talent by Mr. Dorling, son of the proprietor of the Grand Stand at Epsom, has an average circulation of sixty thousand copies. In addition to the papers, magazines and an entire sporting literature are published.

May I attach to this literature, which recommends itself by remarkable productions, an inferior branch which is, however, lively and evergreen? I mean the songs which are hawked at the races, especially those in the north of England, and which the sellers howl to the accompaniment of a musical instrument. These songs, as may be expected, are rough and coarse. From an artistic point of view they have no value, but they keep up the memory of turf events and are not strange

to the history of manners. Under these two aspects they afford such an interest that an Englishman took the trouble to collect them. Those of my readers who are curious to become acquainted with these simple memorials of the popular feeling, will do well to consult "Ritson's Poetic Garland."

As the last of the eccentric and strange existences which are engrafted on the turf, I must not forget the tramp. The tramp is a social institution of Great Britain—an institution, I confess, which it would not be sorry to get rid of, but which, on the contrary, threatens to increase. The name of tramps is given to an unsettled race of men, who live more or less in a state of vagabondage. The English Government published in a Blue Book of 1848 a very interesting report on the life, manners, and even organisation of these English gipsies. Their number is estimated at 65,000. How many of these are connected with the races? It is a proportion which it would be difficult to establish. We can, however, form an idea of their predilection for the turf on seeing the ragged multitude that covers the Downs during the night that precedes the Derby. It would be dangerous to venture into their dark realm without the protection of a police sergeant. The dusky heath, however, offers at a distance an unique spectacle, with its heights crowned with bivouac fires. Each of these fires, fed with dry roots and

furze, is surrounded by some twenty night tramps, male and female, some of whom are lying on the ground, and apparently sleeping; while others, seated on the grass, offer to the flames their harsh features and bronzed faces. According to the remark of the sergeant who accompanied me on this night-round two years ago, the latter seemed to have contracted the habit of sleeping with their eyes open. These groups of tramps must not be confounded with the gipsies, who have also their fires, and have set up their canvas town in various quarters. No real alliance exists between the blood of the Pharaohs and that of the white Bedouins, as the English vagabonds are sometimes called. Everybody, however, does not sleep in the open air. Plank-sheds are put up, under whose roof the aristocratic tramps assemble. Some of these booths have even the audacity to assume the name of hotel. Here, for instance, is the Irish Hotel, in which travellers, men, women, and children, sleep pell-mell, forming an inextricable labyrinth of heads, arms, and legs spread out in every direction. These sheds serve as sleeping apartments during the night, and as stables by day. You also come across certain refreshment booths, in which some customers remain toping all night, while others snore away on barrels, benches, and even under the tables. Some of the masters of these open-air pot-houses have the greatest difficulty, during Epsom week, in getting rid of their

customers at night. One of them, who wanted to shut up at about two in the morning, told the laggards that they must begone. Among them was a powerful fellow, known as the King of the Tramps, who point blank refused obedience. The master of the booth, who was also a powerful Englishman, emptied a bucket of water on his head, and, taking advantage of the state of stupor in which the other fell, in consequence of this baptism, he violently thrust him out by the shoulders. The King of the Tramps made horrible threats, and, in fact, before the end of the race week, the booth was destroyed by fire. This savage act, however, did not re-establish the King's reputation among his brethren; he had received an insult which he had not requited, and on the very night when the booth caught fire, his vagabond majesty was burnt in effigy on the Downs.

It is evident that all this nomadic population is attracted to Epsom by one object; but what is it? In the first place they come to see the races, for they all profess the greatest esteem for the noble art of horsemanship: and next they try to pick up a few pence in any way. Among the tramps some sell all sorts of things, such as pasteboard noses and false whiskers for people who wish to disguise themselves during the festival: others sing: others again beg. When walking over the downs with the sergeant, we met a man who pretended to have lost his sight, and was led

by a dog. "Hollo, my good fellow!" the sergeant said to him, "why, you are not blind!" "That is true," the other answered, opening his eyes all at once, as if he had recognised through the speaker's peremptory voice that pretence was useless; "but it is not enough to think of the present, and, as you know, a man is bound to provide for the future. I am growing older every day, and may lose my sight within a few years: that is an accident against which I am taking precautions, by teaching my dog to lead me. Besides, blind men's dogs have been rising in demand for some time past, and if it does not serve me it will serve another." From this instance an idea may be formed of the tricks to which the tramp has recourse at the race-meetings in order to gain a livelihood.

The institution of the British turf would want a necessary crown, if there were not an assembly of gentlemen to display authority in sporting matters while enjoying a high position in society. There is certainly Tattersall's, as we have seen, to give the tone in monetary transactions; but a council was also required to hold a high hand over the management of the races. This council exists in the shape of the Jockey Club. It represents to some extent the House of Commons in the sporting constitution, and from it issue the motions, laws, and reforms, that interest the admirers of horse-racing. This assembly is at the

same time a tribunal, a sort of Grand Sanhedrim, to which any disputes that arise on the turf are referred, and its decisions are without appeal. This tribunal has sometimes to try frauds committed in races; it would occupy too much space to enter into the question, but there is one circumstance I cannot pass over in silence, as it created such a sensation in England. At the Epsom races of 1844, a horse falsely entered as Running Rein won the Derby. After an investigation it was proved that there had been a substitution: this Running Rein being no other than a horse called Maccabæus, a four-year old, which had been painted for the occasion, and which, having a year's advantage over the other racers legally entered, naturally defeated them. This imposture having been unmasked, the stakes were given, according to the ordeal of the Jockey Club, to the second horse. Hence, on this occasion at least, crime was punished and innocence rewarded on the turf.

We have seen that the British institution of racing has its good and bad points. It would be useless to lay a stress on the immoral side of turf transactions, and I prefer to leave easy declamation to others. The English do not require to be taught the fragility or doubtful character of these fortunes suspended on a horse's gallop. They know also and daily deplore the dangers entailed by the growing betting mania, the injuries it pro-

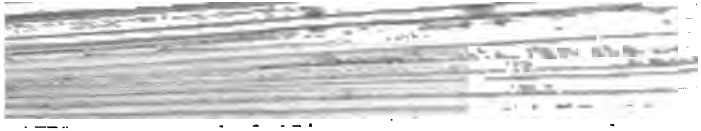
duces for trade, and the troubles these gambling losses introduce beneath the domestic roof. At the same time they are not disposed to lop off a branch of public amusement grafted on the national self-esteem, for the sole reason that this branch is covered with vermin. The English only look to general results: many great and fine things in this institution are based, as they themselves allow, upon an infinitude of dubious or decidedly bad details. What do they care? Logicians of action, they go straight to the point they propose to reach: no objection stops them, and they prefer leaving to time the care of uprooting the evil or checking its excesses. They have been ambitious for the palm in the Isthmian games: no sacrifice has appeared to them too costly to attain it; and in order to keep it they will recoil before none of the evil results which may attach to turf customs.

The English, having said to themselves one day, "Let us have the finest horses in the world," sought to stimulate the taste for racing by all possible means. Though not liking gambling, they accept it as a regrettable, yet powerful ally, which keeps up in certain classes of society the sacred fire of sport. Their principle is that nothing good can be produced without enthusiasm, and in Great Britain the monetary question is closely connected with the excitement of the fancy. Besides, is not a serious interest blended with the

turf? Persons ask themselves whether races are really useful to agriculture or trade, and some of them are inclined to believe that these show horses only serve for the pleasures of rich amateurs. This opinion, however, is overcome in England by facts. The race horse constitutes what the English call a "standard," that is to say, a type, an ideal, which keeps the rest of the breed of horses at a respectable elevation.

Why should I reject a comparison which I heard more than once made by turfmen? As they remark, the great writers of a country do not always represent the superiority of the country itself: they are, if you like, chosen "intellects," but who would venture to deny that they help to elevate the average intelligence of the masses? Well! physical beauty also requires to be sustained by models, and the class of thoroughbreds responds to this want, as regards the race of horses. Crossed with other stronger and more lasting types, they produce brave sons for agriculture and labour. It is owing partly to them that England, the country where the average speed is higher than elsewhere, has formed its excellent breed of draught horses. Some social economists may even consider that it is to his love of animals, and the horse especially, that the Englishman owed his success in colonisation. Wherever, in fact, this enterprising nation throws itself on a desert, it arrives with the mass of strength which it has derived from

living nature, and by its help effaces distance, transforms the soil, and propagates social life. An institution that responds so well to the taste of the English nation, which is at once an amusement and a means of conquest, must not perish on account of a few abuses. Hence, the persons least enthusiastic and most disinterested about the betting question, allow that Great Britain did right in surrounding with every sort of attraction and solemnity sports, in which the progress of human power over matter may be distinguished.

THE END.

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